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Isidor



Mary Mansfield.]

[Frontispiece.

MARY MANSFIELD
AND
NOTHING TO DO

TWO STORIES BY
M. H.

LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
27, PATERNOSTER ROW

—
1897

ALC 2292

MARY MANSFIELD

CHAPTER I.

‘ “Tis not for man to trifle: life is brief,
And sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have no time to sport away the hours;
All must be *earnest* in a world like ours.’

‘ Redeeming the time.’—EPH. v. 16.

IT was the close of a July day. The sun, which had shone for hours with more than usual brightness, had sunk at last; the rosy blush, which, ere sinking, it had sent over the almost cloudless sky, had disappeared, and the grey shades of night were beginning to gather round. The song of the

birds was hushed—only a gentle twitter was heard ere they settled themselves to sleep; whilst in the fields the cattle were lying in groups, many under the shade of the leafy trees, composing themselves to rest. The dew was falling, refreshing the parched ground and the drooping flowers, after the day of burning heat.

A strange quiet pervaded the whole of nature, and influenced every living thing—even the two young girls who sat at the open window of a small room in the Manor-house of Ludley, in one of the midland counties of England. They had sat for some time at that window, having, as the younger of the two termed it, 'a good talk,' and yet enjoying the sights and sounds of nature around them.

They were not sisters, not even relations, only friends. A stranger would have guessed their ages to be anything from six-

teen to twenty; and certainly, if asked, at first sight, to say which was the prettier of the two, would at once have pointed to the fair girl with the regular features, the bright complexion, and the sunny ringlets—Mary Mansfield, the sister of the proprietor of Ludley Manor-house. And yet there were many who, on a closer inspection, would have said that the intelligent countenance, and thoughtful, dark eyes of Eva Campbell, pleased them better than the more beautiful face of her friend. Both were just returned from school, and were entering on their home duties; childhood and girlhood lay behind them; school days were done, and life and its realities were before them. They talked of these things as they sat. Mary had rattled on about the life she would have to lead, the calls to make, the parties to go to, the places to visit, the rides to take. Eva listened quietly, as her

friend spoke thus; then, answering rather her own thoughts than Mary's words, said,—

‘And we have to glorify Christ in our every-day life.’

‘Ah, Eva, that is so like you,’ was the laughing reply; ‘but, really, I have so much to do, I shall have no time to be a Christian.’

For a moment Eva pondered the words, then added, earnestly,—

‘Oh, Mary, what do you mean? You speak as if Christianity were a thing to be practised only at certain hours and then laid aside, instead of entering into all we do, and forming a part of our very life. Do not say, dearest, you have “no time to be a Christian.” Time is God's own gift to us, and surely, in the day of judgment, it will avail us little to plead we had no time to be Christians.’

But Mary was in no humour to listen to

these things. Throwing her arms round her friend's neck, she gave her a kiss, telling her she was the dearest preacher in the world. 'Only, you know, Eva, you are the least bit *too* good, and one ought not to be *too* much anything;' and, not heeding her friend's grave look or her speech, she drew her away to join the company in the drawing-room.

Eva Campbell's home was in the small country town of Ireton, about two miles distant from Ludley Manor. Eva was the eldest of six children, and, at the time we write of, was almost eighteen years of age. Three brothers, of the various ages of sixteen, fourteen, and twelve, and two little girls of eight and six, composed the family, amongst whom, after three years' absence at a boarding-school, Eva had returned to reside. Her father was factor to the Earl of Ludley, whose extensive estates

were in the immediate neighbourhood of Ireton.

Eva's parents were God-fearing people, and from her childhood she had been taught the things of God. But the mere fact of being born and brought up by pious parents will not save a soul, and when Eva left her home for school, it could not be said of her that she was 'born again.' The means of her conversion was the conversation of a young governess—one who, not long before, had herself been brought to Jesus. To the outward eye there was no great change produced in Eva's life, but, ah! she felt the difference. True, she had read her Bible morning and night, as she had been taught to do from infancy; true, she had never neglected the form of prayer first learned at her mother's knee; but now that the Holy Spirit had touched her heart, and revealed the preciousness of her Saviour to

her, showing her her own lost state, and pointing to Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin,—now that she could say of Jesus, not only that He was the Saviour of many, but *her* Saviour, all things appeared changed; the Bible seemed full of new truths, which gave light and joy to her soul, and prayer, formerly a lifeless form, was now felt to be a joy. Old things had passed away, all things had become new.

And now Eva had returned home, to enter on her duties there as a daughter and a sister, with the earnest desire to promote the glory of God. Ere settling down she had gone to spend a couple of days with her friend at the manor; for the last year they had been at the same school, and, friends before, they had become greater friends there, though in many things they disagreed.

Mary Mansfield was an only daughter,

and her father dying whilst she was still a child, she was petted by her mother, and somewhat teased by her only brother, who was four years older than herself. She was a warm-hearted girl, but, alas! the love of God dwelt not in her. When she listened to Eva's earnest entreaties that she would seek the Lord, she always said that she meant to do so some day; but now she had 'no time to be a Christian.' The words rang in Eva's ears as she lay down to sleep that night. 'For what was time given to mortals,' she asked herself, 'if not to prepare for eternity,—if not to serve Jesus?'

And yet how many thousands are just practically living (even although they may not speak as Mary did) as if they had time for everything rather than the great end of their being,—seeking the knowledge of Christ, and Him crucified! Readers, are you seeking this knowledge? or are any of

you amongst the number of those who, in their heart at least, are saying they have no time to be a Christian? Oh, stop and think! 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.' Time is eternity begun.

We shall follow for a while the lives of the friends, and see how both used God's gift of time.

CHAPTER II.

All common things, the day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

EVA CAMPBELL's home, though not large, was a very pleasant one. The house stood back a good way from the street, separated from it by a neatly laid out shrubbery; whilst at the back, a large, old-fashioned garden, with bright flowers, and shady apple and pear trees, sloped down almost to the banks of a clear running river, by following the course of which for a mile or two,

you found yourself far from the sight of the little town, luxuriating in moss-covered, ferny dells. Some months had passed since the evening that Eva had sat with her friend at the open window at Ludley Manor, talking of the future before them. Eva's life since then had been a busy one—more so than even she had anticipated; for she had not been long at home ere she saw, with the deepest grief, that the health of her mother was fast failing, and to save her every trouble, and relieve her of many household duties, became her instant endeavour.

There was much to do—economy was necessary, for although Mr Campbell's income was a fair one, still it did no more than cover expenses, now that his family were growing up, and the expense of their education heavy. A promise of a cadetship to India had been obtained for the eldest

son, Henry, and the money necessary for his outfit would require some extra saving; so that for this year the idea of getting a governess for the two little girls was given up, and Eva undertook to be their teacher. This duty of itself occupied her at least four hours daily; so, what with superintending house matters, mending and making the children's clothes, tending her mother, who was now constantly confined to the sofa, and yet striving to have an hour or two free in the evening to devote to her father, when, weary with business, he sought some relaxation in the family circle, Eva's days were busy ones, and in the midst of so many duties Mary Mansfield would have declared there was no time to be a Christian.

But Eva did not find it so: to these duties she went in the strength of the Lord; and pleasant as some of them would have

been, had they been merely undertaken to please her parents and relieve her mother, they were doubly so when, beyond these motives (praiseworthy though they were), she could feel that in performing them she was serving her God in the calling whereunto He had called her; and her great desire was to carry her Christianity into them all, and so sanctify and raise them.

Fanny and Susie were merry, sweet-tempered children, who at once conceived a great affection for their sister, and loved to listen as she told them stories out of the Word of God, and spoke to them of the loving Saviour, who was once a little child upon the earth, and who was willing to be their friend if they would ask Him. But teaching was not always an easy task: there were days when everything went wrong, when Fanny grew stupid, and Susie cried, and Eva's patience was sorely tried, and

she was tempted to give up the work ; till the thought that this very work, whether easy or not, was given her by God to do, led her to seek His grace to help her to overcome all difficulties. And His grace was not sought in vain. Her own spirit quieted, she was more able to contend with the wrong feelings of the little ones, and in patience to possess her spirit. In her appointed duties she was not only finding time to be a Christian, but God was carrying on the work of grace in her own soul, teaching her the great lesson of self-denial, and leading her, by distrust of herself, to seek more to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and to become more like-minded to Jesus.

Mr and Mrs Campbell both rejoiced, as only believing parents can, at the great change which had passed over Eva. To the mother it was a double source of joy, for

she felt that the thought of death, which she knew for her was not far distant, was now far less painful as regarded leaving her little ones, for she could feel that in Eva they would have not only a kind sister, but a Christian teacher. Many a pleasant conversation on holy things did the mother and daughter hold,—conversations soon to be looked back upon by Eva with sacred pleasure, mingled with bitter regret that they could be held no more on earth. Even at the time they took place, a terror would possess Eva's heart that soon she would be deprived of a mother's counsel and help; but although she had plenty of time to be a Christian, she had none to indulge in morbid forebodings. It was difficult to cast off the weight which oppressed her, and trust to the promise of her Lord, 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be;' but it must be done, lest in looking forward to

the coming evil she should leave unfulfilled
the present duty.

Blessed indeed are they who can leave
the future in the hands of a faithful God,
and act according to the Saviour's advice,—
'Take no thought for the morrow;' doing
as Luther said the little birds did, they can
compose themselves to sleep, and leave God
to think for them.

CHAPTER III.

To breathe, and wake, and sleep,
To smile, to sigh, to grieve;
To move in idleness through earth,
This, this is not to live.

'Quench not the Spirit.'—1 THESS. v. 19.

THE morning was cold, the snow lay thick on the ground, and on the branches of the leafless trees, whilst the tall laurels and evergreen oaks in the shrubbery of Ludley Manor were bent down by the weight which had fallen on them. Not much of the outer cold reached Mary Mansfield in the drawing-room. She was seated in an easy chair, close by a brightly burning fire, with a piece of fancy work in her hand;

but although she had sat there for nearly an hour, very few stitches had been put into it; in fact, she was sitting, as she often did, wasting precious moments in idleness.

Suddenly her brother entered, thereby disturbing a beautiful castle in the air which his sister had been building, and recalling her to a sense of what was going on around. 'Mary,' he said, 'have you seen Eva Campbell lately? I met her brother this morning, and he is terribly cast down about his mother. He thinks she is dying. Dr Baillie has long been anxious about her, and yesterday a London physician, being in the neighbourhood, saw her, and his opinion is a very unfavourable one. Henry says his sister is in great grief; shouldn't you go and see her?'

Mary really looked, as she felt, much shocked. 'Well, Edward,' she said, 'to

tell the truth, I have not seen Eva for more than a month. I always intended to drive down, but really, I have so much to do, I have no time for anything.'

'So much to do, Mary!' said her brother, repeating her words in perfect amazement, 'what on earth do you ever do, except amuse yourself? I wonder what you were doing just now, except idling? No, no; find some better excuse for neglecting your friends than telling a falsehood, and saying you have no time.'

Mary rose half angrily. Edward was the only person who ever told her the plain truth about herself—though, certainly, he might have done so in a pleasanter style. On many an occasion she might have retorted, by asking him if he employed his time so profitably, that he was entitled to blame her?—a question which, at no very distant day, he was to ask himself. But

now Mary's kind heart was too full of grief for her friend; and acting, as, alas! she did too often, on the impulse of a moment, she went away to get ready, and set off to see her friend. Her brother accompanied her to the door, then left her, as he had something to do elsewhere.

It was a relief to Eva to see her friend, whose neglect had pained her much; a relief to be able to give vent to her feelings, which, for the sake of others, she had restrained. All that Edward had told was true. Mrs Campbell was dying. She might linger a few weeks, and that was all. But even through her tears Eva's face brightened, as she told of her mother's faith and hope in Jesus, and of the joy that she felt in His finished work; and how, after she had heard the doctor's opinion concerning her state, she had begged to be left alone a while, and when,

nearly an hour after, Eva slipped in, she had called her to her, and repeated the words, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee' (Isa. xxvi. 3). Adding, 'Yes, Eva, all is peace. I have no fear, because I can say, "The Lord is my righteousness." I have given Him all my sins; and, oh! wonderful love, He has in exchange given me His spotless righteousness.'

'Oh, Mary!' exclaimed Eva, 'is it not a glorious thing to be a Christian? I never felt how glorious, till I heard mamma speak of death.' Mary felt as if it would indeed be a blessed thing, but then she was still young, and there would be plenty of time by-and-by. At present she had other things to think about, and, really, 'no time' for religion.

After half an hour's conversation the friends parted, as Eva was required in her

mother's room,—Mary promising to return soon, and begging Eva to send for her at any time, if she could be of use to her. As she walked slowly home, her thoughts were more serious than usual. She could not help asking herself, If death were to overtake her, coul'd she meet it like Mrs Campbell? No, no; she knew well she could not; but somehow she hoped that, before that time came, she would be different. And so, stifling the workings of the Spirit within her, she turned her thoughts to other subjects, quieting her conscience, as Felix did of old, by saying, that at some more convenient time she would think of these things.

Dear readers, when you feel the Holy Spirit pleading with you to flee to Jesus, oh! stifle not His warnings. He will not always plead. Too often grieved, He may leave you for ever, and yours be the doom

of those to whom the Lord shall say, 'Because I have called, and ye refused, I also will laugh at your calamity, and will mock when your fear cometh.' 'Quench not the Spirit;' and rest not till you can say you have found the Saviour, and taken upon you His yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light.

CHAPTER IV.

'Our beloved have departed,
While we tarry, broken-hearted,
In the dreary, empty house.
They have ended life's brief story,
They have reached the home of glory,
Over death victorious.'

'Men see not the bright light which is in the clouds.
—JOB xxxvii. 21.

It was a fitful April day—one hour dark and lowering, the next sunny and bright. One hour the raindrops glistened on the fresh green leaves, the next they were dried up by the bright sunbeams; but in spite of these contrary influences, vegetation was advancing, young buds were bursting, and the tender grass was springing. Both the

influences were necessary; sun and rain were alike needed to the perfecting of the process. The day was indeed an emblem of the life of man,—clouds and sorrow at one time, joy and hope at another, and yet, to the believer, both working together for good; nay, joy and hope often springing from the dark cloud.

A dark cloud hung over Eva Campbell's home that day, for the loved and loving mother was asleep in Jesus; the body was committed to the dust, but her soul was with her Saviour in glory. The change was a blessed one to her; but oh, the weary void that filled the hearts of those left behind! It was Eva's first great sorrow. Never before had death entered that happy household; but now the circle was broken, and the most loved and (to human eyes) the most needed member was taken away.

The sorrow was indeed a heavy one,—

how heavy, they only can know who have felt it; who have experienced the sickening yearning to see once more the loved face, to hear once more the sound of a mother's voice, whilst knowing all the time they can do so no more on earth. Verily, O Death! thy sting is bitter, not only to thy victims, but also to the sorrowing ones; yet even over thee we are made more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Oh, how Eva felt it, as she sat that April day in her own room, bowed down with grief!—hardly looking up, as her father entered, and, sitting down beside her, drew her to his side and let her nestle her head on his shoulder, as she had so often done in her childhood.

‘Eva,’ he said, ‘we must not sorrow as those that have no hope. We shall meet her again, where death is unknown, and partings are no more. Think of her peaceful death-bed, her full assurance of faith, and

let us strive to follow Christ as she did; let us not murmur at the dealings of the Lord, knowing that He doth not afflict willingly, but for our good, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Heavy duties must now fall on you, my child; but you must seek the strength of the Lord to help you in the performance of them. Follow, as much as you can, the example your dear mother set you, and, like her, strive to glorify God in your daily work. Do not forget to redeem the time, for it is given you to prepare for eternity. They are miserable indeed who put off that preparation to a dying bed, who waste their hours of health in folly, finding time for everything save to be a Christian.'

The father and daughter sat long talking thus, and Eva's heart was comforted by the conversation. Together they sought the mercy-seat, asking that grace which God

promises to His people in their 'time of need,' and then rose with hearts lightened, for the love of God in Christ Jesus was shining even in the midst of the dark cloud.

In these days of sorrow Mary Mansfield was not unmindful of her friend. Eva found her sympathy sweet, and in exerting herself to cheer her friend, Mary was more truly happy than she had ever been. But this was not to last long. Eva's time from henceforth became more devoted to home duties than ever, and Mary, accepting the invitation of a friend to visit her in London, was soon lost in a whirl of gaiety, in the midst of which the few good resolutions formed at the time of Mrs Campbell's death vanished, and the things of the world engrossed her every thought. If at times the remembrance of Eva's calm, useful life crossed her mind, in contrast with her own, she contented herself by saying that it was

very right in Eva,—just the sort of thing she was suited for; but a humdrum life would never do for her,—she liked pleasure, and would seek it. Why shouldn't she?

Why? because the Word of God says 'that the end of these things is death.' Nay, even more, it declares that 'she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth;' following a phantom which she can never grasp, and in the pursuit of which a voice shall suddenly sound, saying, Give in an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest no longer be steward.' Alas! alas! how many are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which profiteth not! living from day to day with no higher aim than to please themselves, wilfully shutting their eyes to the fact that every hour is bringing them nearer to death, judgment, and eternity.

CHAPTER V.

'Ah, little does the gay world know
From whence the Christian's peace doth flow;
While they are fretting on their way,
'Mid cares and troubles every day,
His peace is like a flowing river—
He tastes it here, he'll drink it ever.'

'He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.'—
PROV. xiv. 21.

THE town of Ireton, though not large, was very populous. The number of really good streets might not exceed four or five, and these were inhabited by the principal people in the town, amongst whom were numbered two or three half-pay officers and their families, and several maiden ladies related to some of the county gentry. But the

poorer streets were very numerous, and some of them crowded to excess by the people who worked at the very extensive mills in the neighbourhood. In one of the largest houses in the town dwelt a maiden lady, known and loved by many, and thither Eva Campbell often turned her steps. Miss Byron had once been the belle of the county; and, though seventy years had passed over her head, the remains of her beauty could still be traced in the fine formed features, and the soft blue eyes, though the once dark hair was now white as the driven snow. The almost invariable expression of her countenance now was that of peace—a peace beyond that which earth could give; and yet even they who knew not her history, could read by the deep lines on her face that the peaceful, resting expression had been preceded by a sore mental struggle—by the discipline of

a life. But Miss Byron's sorrow and trial was a thing of the past,—only remembered by a few of the inhabitants of the town, who, when some friend spoke of the kind old lady and her lonely life, would shake their heads, and, looking grave, tell of a fine May morning, when all the village was astir to welcome home the young owner of Bradley Hall, on his return from abroad, to claim the hand of his betrothed, the beautiful and accomplished Miss Byron, but instead, a letter arrived, telling of his death from a fever caught in an Italian village—and how, from that day, his betrothed drooped, and for months her life was despairs of. Such was a slight sketch of the one great trial of the life of the old lady. A young girl, with heart full of ardent love to the creature, she had entered the furnace; but when, after long years, she came out of it, she was refined as pure

gold, bearing the impress of her great Refiner, the void in her heart filled by the warm love she bore her Lord and Saviour, having learned to say from her heart of Him, 'Thou art fairer than the sons of men.' And when years passed on, and one by one she saw the inmates of her home laid in the grave, whilst she was left to live on alone, no loving voice to cheer her, nor kind hand to minister to and anticipate her wants, as had once been the case, she waited on in hope, not repining, only bowing her head, and saying, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' Dearly had she loved Eva's mother, and after her death Eva's greatest pleasure was in the short visits she paid to her mother's friend, whose kind Christian words and advice quieted her sorrow and strengthened her faith. Few days passed now without these minutes of mutual intercourse, and many a lesson of

Christian faith and practice did Eva learn from the experience of the aged Christian.

For many years Miss Byron had been unable to go out of doors, and to her Eva's visits were a source of no small pleasure; and thus, whilst Eva was obtaining comfort and good to herself, she, by her kind attentions and loving words, was pouring balm into the heart so long stricken, and conferring a boon as great as that which she was receiving. Few estimate aright the blessings the thoughtful young may confer on the aged or invalid, in all ranks of life, by their frequent visits and their cheerful words; and the visits of Eva Campbell to the old lady (at which Mary Mansfield wondered so much, protesting she never could bear to visit old ladies, they were so tiresome), were not unobserved by Him who noteth the least kind action done to any who are of the household of faith,—

saying, 'Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto me.' Verily, the cup of cold water given in the name of Christ, will in no wise lose its reward.

Amongst the poor Eva Campbell was well known, and much beloved. Her home duties were her first cares ; but she did not stop there. A Christian herself, her great desire was that others might share the like joys ; and to many of these hard-working ones did she delight to read and speak of a Saviour's love, telling them to remember how, when Jesus was on earth, He came as a working man. Her words were always listened to with eagerness,—urging them to regard Him as a real friend who cared for them, and would bear their burdens if they would only roll them on Him,—and if many of them fell on hardened ground and brought forth no fruit, there were some

hearts into which they sank, and by the blessing of God took root and bore fruit.

One result of the chastening which Eva had undergone was the greater tenderness which she felt for those in distress. To a certain degree this had always been the case, but she felt a difference now that she had really experienced the grief of bereavement herself. She could enter more fully now into the distress of children mourning over a dead parent, or a mother weeping at the death of a child, and she was able to comfort them with the comfort wherewith she herself had been comforted of God. Welcome as she had always been, she was doubly so now in the house of mourning.

Her time for visiting amongst the poor was, of course, limited, and often she would fain have lingered longer, so many needed help and comfort. No doubt there were plenty more people beside herself who could

visit and console; but, ah! how disproportionate the number of labourers to the work to be done! Several ladies had undertaken the opening of an evening school for women, where those that liked might attend for a mere trifle, and learn reading, writing, and plain work. But amongst the men it was different; little or nothing was being done, and too many spent the evening in the gin-shops, or lounged about, smoking and drinking. A school had been opened for them by some of the clergy of the town, but the attendance was so small and so irregular, that, after a short trial, it was relinquished.

But Eva could not help thinking that something more might be tried. Were there none, she asked herself, of the many well-educated men in the neighbourhood, who could come forward and give some of their leisure time to this work? At Miss

Byron's suggestion, she even urged her father to try and stir up some one to the work ; but his endeavours were vain ; for many of the men fitted for it were, like himself, hard-working ones, whose time was not at their own disposal ; and one or two of the neighbouring gentlemen to whom he proposed it, laughed at the idea, or said that it was the business of the clergy to see to that sort of thing. And so the subject dropped. But it was one day to be revived, and carried out in God's appointed time, and by His chosen instrument.

In the meantime Eva did what she could in her own sphere of usefulness, and the blessing returned to her own bosom. Many were dependent on her ; brothers and sisters looked to her for sympathy in their joys, and advice in their perplexities, and such she was ever ready to give. She was growing in grace, in patience, and in self-denial,

leaning more and more for help on the arm of Jesus. Her trial had been sanctified to her. The dark cloud had burst in showers of blessing.

CHAPTER VI.

To live to God is to requite
His love as best we may;
To make His precepts our delight,
His promises our stay.'

'Be ye holy; for I am holy.'—1 PET. i. 16.

TIME was passing on, unmarked by any great change in Eva's home-life. Each day brought its own duties, its own joys, and its own trials. Days insensibly ran into weeks, the weeks to months, and the months to a year; and on looking back there seemed little to mark one day from another.

Life is not (whatever the young may think) made up of great events; few are

the lives in which any very wonderful incidents occur. Little duties, little cares, little joys, constitute the lives of most of us, and they who, despising these are waiting for some marvellous event to happen ere they show their heroism, may have to wait in vain for any such opportunity. True heroism is oftener shown by doing our daily work, and patiently bearing petty trials, than in performing wonderful deeds, which call down the praise of an admiring world.

The two friends had met but little during the year which had elapsed since Mrs Campbell's death. Mary's visit to London lasted longer than she had expected; and when she came home, several of Edward's Cambridge friends were visiting at the Manor, and what with rides and pic-nics got up for their entertainment, there was really 'no time' for going to Ireton; and

besides, as she told her mother, in answer to her question why she was neglecting Eva so, 'There was no use in going to see her now; she was always engaged about something or another—teaching the children, or visiting the poor—so that one never could see her.'

'How often have you tried to see her since you came home, Mary?' asked her brother.

Mary, blushingly, was obliged to confess, 'Only once.'

'Have been so busy, you've had no time to go oftener, I suppose?' was the sarcastic reply.

But after this conversation the friends met oftener for a while, and in the month of May, ere Mary again took flight to London, she accepted Eva's pressing invitation to come and spend a few days with her in her quiet home. These days were pleasant

ones to both,—the pleasantest they should ever spend together again; for, although they knew it not, their two paths were, ere long, to separate,—ah, how widely!

For some days the children got holidays, and many a pleasant walk did the friends take in the neighbouring country, drinking in the pure air, and feasting eyes and ears with the beautiful sights and melodious sounds of rejoicing nature. The fresh spring green, the moss-covered ground, the tufts of the pale primroses, and the fragrance of the half-hidden violets, all alike spoke to Eva of the hand of her God, and raised her thoughts from earth to heaven; whilst the mercy and love manifested by the bestowal of these things on man, not for his use, but for his pleasure, led her to think of the still greater love manifested by the gift of His only Son, that we through Him might have life eternal. They know

little of the God of nature, who know Him not also as the God of grace, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; and Eva's faith was ever strengthened, and her love increased, when she thus enjoyed the Lord in His works; and the time thus spent could not be called wasted. If Mary Mansfield did not see these things in the same light as her friend, she yet found pleasure in them in her own way, and the day was to arrive when she would recall these pleasant walks and quiet conversations as amongst the happiest moments of her life.

But at the present, serious thoughts troubled her little, and she often turned the conversation to her approaching London visit, and the gaieties she would enter into, often joking Eva about the quiet, old-maidenish sort of life she led, adding, 'However, I dare say, after all, the gay life I lead would not be to your liking;

for you would think it wrong, with your notions, wouldn't you, Eva?'

'Every life must be a wrong one, Mary, which is not spent as God designed it to be; and surely, the life which has no greater end than our own gratification is not a right one, and real peace and happiness cannot be found in it. Oh, Mary dear, stop and ask yourself what use you are making of God's gift of time.'

Mary's only answer was, 'Edward, where in the world did you come from?' as her brother suddenly appeared; 'you have been eavesdropping, eh?'

'Hardly that,' was the laughing reply, as he shook hands with Eva, 'though I must plead guilty to having overheard Miss Campbell's last words.'

Seeing Eva looked confused, he changed the conversation, reminding his sister she need not have been so surprised at meeting

him, as they were now on the Ludley Manor grounds ; then, after a few minutes, they parted, the ladies returning to Ireton, and Edward Mansfield to the Manor.

‘They had met Edward *by chance*,’ Mary told Mr Campbell. Well, it was the same chance which sent the flash of lightning to strike down Luther’s friend, in order to lead Luther’s thoughts to holy things,—the same chance which caused the meeting between Philip and the Ethiopian in his chariot, on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza.

CHAPTER VII.

• If I could be where God were not—
That were indeed a dreadful thought;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding Him in all.'

'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.'—Psa. xxiv. 1.

THE spring season had come round once more, and was fast merging into summer. Once more the eye of man rested on the delicate, fresh green foliage, the exquisite blossom of the fruit trees, and the spotless beauty of the early flowers. Once more spring sounds greeted the ear,—the hum of insects, the murmuring of the brooks, the song of birds, the gentle rustling of the

fresh breeze. Once more had the great Creator read to man from the book of Nature the truth of the resurrection.

The garden and grounds of Ludley Manor were clothed in beauty, the old lime trees in the lawn sweeping the ground with their branches, whilst the stately oaks and elms were slowly expanding their leaves; but the house itself looked desolate, for its owners were on the Continent, where they had been for some months, and the beautiful spring season was spent by Mary Mansfield amid the orange groves and olive trees of Nice. She had spent the last autumn and winter in travelling from place to place in company with her mother and brother; had seen the beauties of nature under many phases, had crossed the Alps, visited the beautiful lakes of Lombardy, been rowed in gondolas from street to street in Venice, and seen the wondrous expanse of the Cam-

pagna, stood within the ruins of the Colosseum, sailed on the Bay of Naples, ascended Mount Vesuvius, and at last settled for a while in the beautiful town of Nice. Mary's pleasure in her foreign tour consisted more in the excitement of hurrying from place to place, and having it in her power to say she had seen the places and visited the spots which most of her fashionable London acquaintances had done, than in any enjoyment of these scenes for their own intrinsic beauty, or their powerful associations.

She wrote a hurried account of her travels to Eva, touching very slightly on the places visited, but enlarging greatly on the friends met at the different towns, and the parties of pleasure gone to, concluding her letter with the half playful question, 'Now, Eva, in the midst of all this life of change and bustle, could even you tell me,

how I can find time to be a Christian? I know you would enjoy many of the sights I see more than I do, but I defy even you to be able to have quiet, good thoughts, get good, or do good, in this racketing life.'

Was it so? thought Eva, as she closed the letter. Could she not have served her God, and glorified His name, had she joined (as she had been urgently pressed to do) the travelling party? Surely travelling amid some of the most grand and beautiful parts of the world, should not blunt, but elevate the soul, and make the presence of the Creator of them all felt very near. Was there no knowledge to be gained, no lesson to be learned, from visiting the wondrous works of art of which Mary wrote? No solemn warnings to be read from the lessons of the past, as they stood amid the ruins of the eternal city? Would the spot where so many of Christ's faithful followers suf-

fered, in the early days of the Church, call forth no holy, no humbling thoughts? Could the eye of faith see no hope of brighter days in store for that land of beauty? And, surrounded by fellow-immortals, mingling with so many different people, would there be no opportunities of saying a word for her Lord and Master, or helping by a kind word or action some of His suffering people? Surely it could not be so? Nay, she remembered several cases in which she had heard some highly prized Christian friends speak of the good they had got, and the pleasure they had experienced, in their foreign tour; and with a sigh she owned to herself, that had Mary's heart been filled with love to Jesus, and with the desire that His name might be glorified in and by her, she could have done so amid all changes of scene, and, in gaining increased knowledge, and endeavouring

to extract good from all she saw, might certainly have found 'time to be a Christian.'

This opinion she did not hesitate to write to her friend. Mary read the letter, smiled at its earnest tone, declared Eva was the best of girls,—then set off to join a party of pleasure, and in frivolous conversation and idle laughter sought and succeeded in drowning some self-accusing thoughts called forth by Eva's letter. Alas! all serious thoughts lasted but for an hour with Mary Mansfield: the cares and pleasures of this world choked them, and they brought forth no fruit.

Perhaps the one of the party who enjoyed the foreign tour most was Edward. His mind, well stored with classic lore, took an intellectual pleasure in all he saw. For him every place was filled with reminiscences of the mighty past. Amid the

ruins of ancient Rome he was lost in remembrance of its glories in days when its name inspired terror, and its emperors were the conquerors of the world, to the time when it was the acknowledged seat of learning and the fine arts. And now, of all its past grandeur, what remained? ruins, beautiful in their decay, but ruins still. And what of its people? what of the descendants of those master minds who had devised and executed those wondrous works of art? Alas! all was changed. The mind and the spirit of the ancients might still lurk in the breasts of the people, but it was crushed and kept down now. What could raise it up? 'A change of their mode of government,' thought Edward; 'more freedom allowed to their expression of opinion, then Italy might once more awake to life, claim a place amongst nations, and vindicate her ancient name.'

But, rationally as in many ways Edward looked on the scenes and people around him, and derived from them much increase of knowledge, still, in viewing them, one element was left out, for that was as yet awanting in his own mind,—the religious element, without which no nation can be judged aright, was disregarded. The political changes Edward spoke of might do much, free expression of opinion was much to be desired, but small was the good these changes would effect until the Word of the living God (given for the use and good of every human being) was freely circulated, and all, rich and poor alike, learned and unlearned, allowed to search the Scriptures for themselves, and learn the grand truth that it is Christ, and He alone, who hath the key of heaven,—who openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth. Then, and not till then, shall the dark

clouds roll away from the beautiful land of Italy.

But of these things Edward thought not. The greatness of his own country he attributed solely to its just government and its social institutions, and fancied that these things alone would lead to the greatness of any nation, and left out of sight that Britain's glory is her open Bible—her great palladium, her Saviour God.

Readers, let us thank God for our national privileges, and forget not, that to whom much is given, of them shall much be required. What avails it to any to be allowed untrammelled to read the Word of God, if they neglect to do so? or if, having done so, they care not to act up to its holy commands? It will not save us, but rather surely condemn us, to say we lived in the midst of gospel light, but shut our eyes to it, preferring the darkness.

CHAPTER VIII.

‘She has chosen the world and its misnamed pleasures:
She has chosen the world before heaven’s own treasures.’

‘Be not conformed to this world.’—ROM. xii. 2.

THE two paths were widely parted now, Eva felt, as she sat in her own room, on the evening of Mary Mansfield’s marriage-day. It was a bright evening in the leafy month of June; out of doors nature seemed holding a jubilee; the sun was shedding floods of golden light, streaming through the fresh green foliage of the summer-clad trees, and making the gay flowers look gayer still, while a gush of melodious music issued

from many a tree and bush. Very different were the various notes, but yet all united in a marvellous harmony, swelling up to heaven, in strains of gratitude and praise, for the day's mercies. But Eva's heart did not echo the feeling of rejoicing. The marriage festival had not been a happy one to her, for she knew that Mary had consulted merely her own pleasure in the choice she had made.

Two years had passed since the friends had spent that pleasant time together of which we have spoken; but since that time they had seldom met. Mrs Mansfield and Edward had returned home a few months before, but Mary had remained with her London friends. During all this time her God was forgotten, and the meaningless frivolities of the world had deadened the better feelings of her nature. Her life might indeed be termed 'the pursuit of

pleasure.' Ah! had she been as zealous in seeking the reality as she was in pursuing the phantom, how different would have been the reward!

It was during this last London visit that Mary became acquainted with a Mr Sandford—a gay, rattling, handsome young man, notorious for nothing except his wildness and his large fortune. Attracted by Mary's beauty, he sought her society as often as possible, and ere long asked her to become his wife. Her consent was at once given; but, to her great amazement, the most violent opposition to the marriage was made by Edward. Such a man should never be the husband of his sister, he declared, whilst he could prevent it. He hastened at once to London, and privately remonstrated with his sister, telling her what he knew of Mr Sandford's real character, assuring her that if she persisted in marrying him, she would

be the first to repent it, as his intense selfishness alone made it impossible for him ever to be a kind husband.

But Mary would not listen to remonstrance. She was of age, and no one had any power over her; even her mother (although she knew *she* would listen to no reason) dared not oppose her wish. Nay, that night she sat down and wrote to Eva (the first time for many months), begging her to use her influence to obtain Mrs Mansfield's consent to the marriage. But Eva would do no such thing, and only wrote back imploring Mary to think seriously ere she married a man of whom she knew so little.

It proved of no avail. Mary's mind was made up; and at last Mrs Mansfield, too foolishly indulgent to Mary's whims, as she had always been, gave a reluctant consent, half hoping that, as Edward was so young, he might judge Mr Sandford too harshly;

and, besides, she comforted herself by saying, 'Men quiet down so after marriage!'

Edward held out as long as possible, but, at his mother's earnest request, he consented to be present at the marriage, and give away his sister. There was outward show, but how little real rejoicing, at that marriage! Eva was one of the bridesmaids, and never could she forget the look of deep grief on Edward's countenance as he gave his sister (whom, with all her faults, he dearly loved) to the man who was to be her husband.

'I would rather have followed Mary to her grave than have given her to that man,' he said to Eva, as they watched the pair drive off; adding, greatly to Eva's surprise, 'What use will she make now of God's gift of time?'

Altogether, the day had been an uncomfortable one, and as Eva sat thinking it

over, she felt depressed and dreary. Only the night before, she and Mary had sat together talking, and even then Eva had entreated her to draw back,—not to unite herself for life to a man who, she acknowledged, had no fear of God before his eyes.

Mary's answer was one which struck the deepest grief into the heart of her friend :— 'Eva,' she said, 'don't speak to me any more in that way. You and I have chosen different paths, and we see things with different eyes. Yours may be the right one, but it is steep and narrow, and would be to me very gloomy. Mine is broad and sunny, with present pleasures on every hand, and I have chosen it. I don't know where it may end, but it is the only path for me. I once told you I had "no time to be a Christian," but now I have no wish to be one ;' and without a word more she left the room ; and Eva, covering her face with her

hands, groaned in spirit. Her friend had deliberately told her that she had chosen her portion in this life; she had taken the 'god of this world' to be her master, rather than Jesus, and had thrown in her lot with the unbelievers.

Reader, say not that *you* could never make such a choice. Two years before Mary would not have spoken thus, but a continuance of wrong doing in the face of light had hardened her heart. Mary would once have said the same, but she sought not the assistance of Him who alone can 'keep us from falling.'

CHAPTER IX.

'Behold ! he prays whose lips were sealed
In silent scorn before,—
Sighs for the closet's holy calm,
And hails the welcome door.'

By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.'—EPH. ii. 8.

IT was early morn; the sun had not yet risen in the eastern sky, and the dew lay thick on the grass and shrubs, whilst a thin mist concealed the distant landscape. But, early as it was, Edward Mansfield was seated reading—a strange, half joyous, half wondering expression lighting up his countenance.

Yes, the light had come at last; the darkness was past; the bright beams of the

Sun of righteousness were shining around. Often had Eva's question, 'What use are you making of God's gift of time?' rung in Edward's ear. Ay, what *was* he doing? What had he ever done with that gift? He had often found fault with Mary for wasting her time as she did, but now his own conscience whispered loudly that he had done no more than she. He reviewed his past life, and the bitter thought arose, Who had been the better for that life, and what had been its aim? To gratify self, was the too true answer.

More than four years had elapsed since he was of age, and had entered into the full possession of his property. Many people were dependent on him, but what had he done for them? Nothing, absolutely nothing. When any one came to him for assistance, he would refer them, laughingly, to his man of business, de-

clearing that he knew nothing about such things, and would turn to his own pleasures,—his horses, his dogs, or his shooting. These were the things for the enjoyment of which he fancied his life was given; and because these sports obliged the taking a large amount of bodily exercise, he never imagined he was wasting time in idleness like his sister.

Eva's question, which he had heard so unexpectedly, was the first thing that opened his eyes to the real state of matters. Time, a gift bestowed by God to be used to His glory,—could it be so? Often the question arose, and common sense seemed to answer, Yes. But how should he learn to use his time aright? What should he do?

Grieved to the heart by his sister's marriage, Edward had turned in disgust from his usual occupations, dissatisfied with himself and all around. He opened his too

long neglected Bible, and began to read—at first partly to turn his thoughts from painful subjects, but as he read the light shone, the darkness fled. His own case was depicted there; the self-convicted sinner was pointed to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Morning after morning found him engrossed in the study of the Word; the Holy Spirit blessed the reading, and, ere long, Edward Mansfield was sitting an humble learner at the foot of the Cross. He had not chosen God, but God had chosen him, and ‘ordained him that he should go and bring forth much fruit.’

Who can describe aright the wonders of the second birth? Who tell of the marvellous joy shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, when, for the first time, a man can look up and feel that God is his portion for evermore; that he is no longer a

stranger and a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints of the household of God, being brought nigh by the blood of Jesus?

Yes, Edward felt now he was not his own, but bought with a price, and that, therefore, his time, his talents, his riches, must all be consecrated to the service of his Master; cheerfully given to Him who had purchased, by the shedding of His blood, an inheritance for him.

The news soon spread, reaching even the town of Ireton, that Edward Mansfield was a changed man,—'Turned saint,' said some, with a sneer. 'Turned Christian,' said others, with thanks to God. Amongst the latter were Mr Campbell and Eva; and their strain was but the echo of that which angels were singing around the throne.

Readers, may there be the same cause of rejoicing over you!

CHAPTER X.

‘Life, within a narrow grin
Of giddy joys comprised,
Is falsely named; ‘tis no such thing,
But rather death disguised.’

‘Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.’—GAL. vi. 7.

IT was a cold December night, the snow was falling thickly, drifting in the faces of, and half blinding, the many people exposed to the inclemency of the weather as they traversed the streets of London. Biting cold it was, whilst the sound of the howling wind increased the feeling of desolation in the heart of many a poor, half-clad, half-starved creature that prowled about, seeking in vain the shelter of some

hospitable door. Truly theirs was a hard lot, and much to be pitied: would that there were more hands stretched out to help!

But misery is not confined alone to the poor and helpless; it can dwell in the hearts of those who live in the houses of the great, surrounded by all the appliances of wealth. It was dwelling that very night in the breast of the young and beautiful mistress of a splendid house in one of the most fashionable squares in London.

Yes, Mary Sandford, in the midst of luxury, surrounded by all the comforts and elegancies of life, sat that night in her own room a miserable woman. She acknowledged that the gay, flowery path which she had chosen had deceived her, and was really one of bitterness and woe. Oh, for Eva's faith and Eva's comfort! How willingly would she have changed lots with her now! But it might not be.

So, with a sickening feeling, she turned to her toilette, and, arrayed in the crimson velvet dress, with sparkling diamonds on her neck, set off to some place of fashionable resort, where, at least, she was sure to meet him whom she called husband. The world praised her beauty, and talked of her as the happiest of women, whilst all the time her heart was groaning in misery. But the world saw only the outer, not the inner life; and how different these two often are! Mary Sandford was but reaping the fruits of her own doing.

Six months had passed since her marriage, and all that Edward had foretold concerning it had come to pass. She soon found that her husband was a selfish, heartless, dissipated man. Indignant at the opposition made by her friends to the marriage, it was not long ere he made her understand that little or no communication

was to take place between her and them ; that, in fact, she belonged now entirely to him, and must submit to his will in all things.

At first Mary strove against this, but ere long was obliged to yield, and gave her husband the servile obedience of a slave, not from love, but fear. Weary in spirit, the constant life of pleasure began to cloy, and she would willingly have drawn back a little, but she dared not ; day after day went on in one endless round of so-called gaiety.

Few were the minutes Mary and her husband ever spent together, and it was not long ere she saw too well—that any love he had ever felt for her was gone. Alas ! was it for this she had given up mother, brother, friend ? for this resisted the striving of the Holy Spirit ? Ah ! if she had sought, even then, pardon at the foot of

the Cross, can we doubt that she would have obtained it? But Mary sought no forgiveness, did not carry her heavy burden to Him who alone could lighten it; but, hiding her grief in her own bosom, entered into society, and engaged in its frivolities with the same outward appearances as of old.

Soon after Edward's conversion he wrote an earnest, affectionate letter to his sister, telling her of the change in his own views, and entreating her to think of these things, to seek Jesus whilst it was called to-day, reminding her of Eva's question, 'What use are you making of God's gift of time?'

Mary shed tears over the letter, envied Edward the peace and joy he seemed to have found, wished that she had been once more as she had been on the day when Edward overheard Eva's question; but there was the only effect of the letter. 'Ah,'

she sighed, as she put it down, 'if Edward only knew how impossible it is for me to find "time to be a Christian!"' And yet, of the boasted pleasures of the world she had learned to say, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'

How very great was the contrast now between the paths of the two friends! Eva's was leading her onwards and upwards in her heavenly course; Mary's, down, down to destruction, far from God and hope.

Readers, believe that the experience, even of worldlings themselves, is, that a life spent in the service of Satan is a wretched one, void of peace in this world, or hope in the next. They, and they only are happy, who by faith can say their transgressions are forgiven, their sins covered.

CHAPTER XI.

‘We are the Lord’s; then let us gladly tender
Our souls to Him in deeds, not empty words:
Let heart, and tongue, and life combine to render
No doubtful witness that we are the Lord’s.’

‘As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good
unto all men.’—GAL. vi. 10.

A YEAR had passed, the month of December was come again, and a full bright moon shone in the clear winter sky. It peeped into many a window, and witnessed many a scene of joy and sorrow. It shone into the neat parlour where Eva Campbell sat, encircled by brothers and sisters, into whose merry jokes she was warmly entering.

All there spoke of peace, comfort, and home joys. Christmas time was near, and

one of the boys had picked up a holly wreath, with its bright berries and glossy leaves, and had playfully put it on his sister’s head, drawing forth a united exclamation of delight from the others. ‘Oh, Eva, how nice you look!’ And Eva responded to their mirth: sharer as she was of many of their little troubles, she also was the sharer of their youthful joy. Very happy she was as she sat there, rich in the love of those dearest to her, richer still in the love of Him whose grace sustained and held her up in all her ways,—the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. One could see by the calm repose on her brow, the holy light in her eye, that the peace of God was keeping her heart, raising her thoughts, calling forth all the nobler powers of her mind, and imparting to her the calm dignity of a Christian woman.

The moon shone on no happier home on

that December night, than that of Eva Campbell's; but it shone also into a room in the village of S——, where a scene in which Eva and her old friend Miss Byron took great interest was taking place. The room was a large one, filled round with benches, in the centre of which was a reading-desk. The room was pleasantly lighted, and a bright fire was burning. A number of men, mostly young, entered in their working dress, and seated themselves on the benches.

Awkward enough many of them looked, as if half wondering at finding themselves there; some even lounged in, pipe in mouth, but after a few minutes put it out, and sat quietly down. ' 'Tis a wonder to me what a gentleman like him will get to say to the likes of us,' was heard from many quarters; while some remarked, ' 'Twasn't likely 'twas anything they'd care

to hear; but all remarks were hushed by the entrance of a tall, gentlemanly looking young man, accompanied by Mr Campbell, who introduced the stranger as Mr Mansfield, of Ludley Manor, who had kindly consented to address those assembled there that evening.'

Edward went up to the reading-desk and frankly addressed the men, telling them that his desire was to interest and instruct them, and he hoped they might spend a pleasant evening together. He chose as his subject, Franklin's expedition to the Polar regions, in which every one at the time was interested; and, by his vivid descriptions of Polar scenes and Polar life, succeeded beyond his expectations in securing the attention of his audience, and drawing forth many a half-suppressed exclamation of wonder.

Edward spoke easily and well, and as he

described the marvellous handiwork of the great Creator, as shown in all the works of creation, he warmed with the greatness of the subject; and after quoting the words of the Psalmist, 'O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all,' he went on to show how all the works of the Lord praised Him,—'fire and hail, snow and vapours, mountains and all hills, fulfilling His word; and shall man, the great masterpiece of His creation, alone be silent, and refuse to sing His praise? No, my friends, it cannot, it must not be so; with the breath which God himself has given us, let us praise Him for all the undeserved mercies we receive daily from Him. Let us now thank Him.' And before the people could recover their astonishment, they found themselves joining in the earnest prayer offered up by the young lecturer to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The evening's engagement was a great success; many a voice was heard loud in the praise of the young gentleman. 'He speaks right well,' said one. 'It's a pleasure to hear the like of him,' said another. 'That was something like a prayer he gave us,' said a third. 'We would like to hear him again,' was the feeling of all; 'no pride about him: he spoke as if we were as good as himself.'

As Mr Campbell walked home, accompanied by Edward, he congratulated him warmly on his success. Both felt a good work was begun, which might prove of much use amongst these neglected ones. Edward's time now was consecrated to his God, and earnestly he laboured to use the gift aright; love to souls urged him to the work, and made him zealous to speak the word in season and out of season.

Mr Campbell's Christian experience was

of great value to Edward, who sought his advice on all subjects; and very earnest were his entreaties that, whilst Edward was thus zealous in his Master's service, he should pray fervently that the spiritual life of his soul might advance, that he might grow more like-minded to Jesus.

There were many who regarded with amazement the change which had come over the once careless young man, and who even unwillingly were constrained to acknowledge that religion had decidedly improved him, making him more regardful of the feelings, and more thoughtful to the wants of those around him. 'Show us a sign,' was the language of many of the unbelievers in the days when Jesus was on earth, 'and we will believe.' Signs and wonders were wrought, but still they believed not. 'Show us a sign,' say the unbelievers in our day; 'let a miracle be worked

by the Lord, and we will believe.' And the miracle is wrought,—the greatest of all miracles,—a man is born again by the Holy Spirit before their eyes, but still they believe not. Well did He, who spake as never man spake, know the human heart, when He said, ' If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead.'

CHAPTER XII.

‘Whither, oh, whither? life’s short pleasures past,
Hope’s funeral knell the sound on every blast;
Heaven’s entrance closed, to ruin hurried fast,
A leaf before the wind.’

‘What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.
—JAMES iv. 14.

CHRISTMAS night had come, with its holy memories and household gatherings; there was joy and rejoicing in many a heart and home that night. Old and young were met together, enemies were reconciled, and cares and troubles were for the time forgotten, and a double portion of the Spirit of peace and love, which descended from heaven so

many hundred years before, rested on the world for a while at least. But no sound of joy or mirth arose that night from Ludley Manor. A crushing sorrow had fallen there; a sound of mourning was rising to heaven—a mother weeping for her child—uttering, like David of old, the wail so often wrung from the parent's heart, and yet so unavailing, 'Would God I had died for thee.'

Yes, the only, the too-well loved daughter of the house, Mary Sandford, was dead,—suddenly called, in the very bloom of her God-forgetting life, to appear before the Judge, and render an account of her stewardship. What account could she give? To what use had she put her God-given talents? In what robe could she appear before her heavenly Father, when she had refused to wear the only dress with which a guilty sinner dare stand before his Judge,

the spotless robe of his Redeemer's righteousness ?

The summons was indeed unlooked-for. The last words she uttered were the names of her mother and Eva. A letter to the latter was found lying on her dressing-table. The shock was all the more to Mrs Mansfield, that she and her daughter had never met since her marriage day, and there, on that Christmas night, she lay stricken with sorrow. Beside her, soothing her sorrow, and mingling her tears with hers, sat Eva Campbell, Mary's early friend. With her father's consent, and at Edward's earnest entreaty, she had agreed to remain some days at the Manor, whilst he at once started to London to attend his sister's funeral.

These were painful, trying days to Eva, but God gave her the needed grace to bear them, and made her a comfort to the

mourning one. 'Read again,' she would say, as Eva read the Saviour's blessed invitation to the weary and heavy laden to come to Him and rest; and, humbled and contrite, the poor, sorrow-stricken mother came and found rest at the foot of the Cross.

On his return Edward brought Eva the letter addressed to herself, found on the table the night of Mary's death. With trembling hands, in the quiet of her own room, she read it. It was written in great agitation, and as if in the presentiment of approaching death. 'Eva,' it ran, 'you have chosen the right path; it will guide you to a blessed end: mine has failed me—oh, how cruelly failed me!—and now, when I would fain have turned back, I cannot—I see no way. Eva, would, oh, would I had found "time to be a Christian!" Farewell!' Over this letter Eva shed many

bitter tears. Alas! poor Mary, oh, that she had been wise, that she had understood her latter end. There is no repentance beyond the grave : God's Word declares, He that is unjust, shall be unjust still, and he that is righteous, shall be righteous still.

Reader, the choice you make now must fix your doom hereafter. Which path have you chosen, and in which are you walking? There may be difficulties in the narrow one—often it may seem dark and lonesome; but there is One who will guide you aright, remove all difficulties, carry all your burdens, and give you the needed light—One who hath already, by the shedding of His blood, obtained eternal redemption for all those who are walking in the narrow path.

CHAPTER XIII.

• Oh, happy house, where two are one in heart,
In faith and hope are one;
Whom death can only for a little part,
Not end the union here begun.'

'Choose you this day whom ye will serve:.... but
as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'—
JOSH. xxiv. 15.

IT was a bright summer evening. A cool
breeze had arisen, and cleared the slight
haze which had enveloped nature all that
sultry day; and under its influence all liv-
ing things were roused from the lethargy
which had oppressed them.

Certainly no lethargy was visible in the
movements of a large number of people
collected on the borders of the Ludley

Manor estate. All were in their holiday dress, evidently assembled on some important occasion, evincing, by their words and actions, that they were on the tiptoe of expectation. The crowd of people was large, consisting chiefly of the working classes, amongst whom a numerous body of young men was conspicuous, whilst several farmers in their gigs drove up, and joined the assemblage. Pleasure beamed on every face, and loud remarks were heard from all.

‘They’ll not be long in coming now, surely,’ said one. ‘I’d not mind waiting all night just to get a sight of their faces,’ said another. ‘Didn’t she tend my Mary through that bad illness of hers like as if she’d been her sister? And as to him, he’s a real gentleman, and no mistake, whoever’s the other.’

Suddenly all conversation was interrupted by the cry, ‘They’re coming!’ and an open

carriage and pair drove up; and amidst loud cries of 'Long live Mr and Mrs Mansfield!' Edward and his bride (the Eva Campbell of our story) found their carriage stopped, the horses taken out, and themselves drawn in triumph to their home by a number of the young men.

Over the door was a beautiful floral arch, with the word 'Welcome!' in the centre. On the threshold stood Edward's mother, ready to receive with open arms her new daughter, Eva; whilst close by stood Eva's father, a glad witness to the hearty reception given to his daughter and son-in-law, rejoicing in the knowledge that the reception was no show, got up for effect, but the real outburst of affection for those who had proved by their deeds that they had the good of the poorer classes thoroughly at heart. The couple stood on the door steps ere entering, and saluted the people, and

Edward thanked all present for the warm reception they had given his bride and himself, adding, that he and Mrs Mansfield valued their kind wishes much, and were desirous, with God's blessing, to be in every way the promoters of their comfort and happiness.

It was with a heart overflowing with happiness and gratitude to the Giver of all things, that Eva, leaving for a short time the mother and son together, slipped away, and sat quietly down at the window where we first saw her, as she and Mary sat talking over the future before them. How mercifully had God led her since that day! bearing with her shortcomings, lightening her burdens, increasing her faith, brightening her hopes in eternal things, chastening her, but only for her good.

No wonder if, in the midst of her own happiness, a tear fell at the thought of her

dead friend. Once more she seemed to see her, as she had sat there on just such another summer evening,—seemed to hear her laughing voice, as she said the words, 'I've no time to be a Christian.' Poor Mary, she forgot she must have time to die—forgot that they who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind. As Eva thought on these things a warm sense of gratitude to God filled her heart. What but sovereign grace had made her to differ.

Eva's reverie was broken by the entrance of her husband, who came to take her down to his mother—that mother to whom both were doubly united by the tie of Christian love; and if Edward noticed the tear in the eye of his wife, he made no remark on it, knowing well the emotion which had called it forth.

Eva's new life brought with it new responsibilities and new duties, but grace

sufficient was given her to perform them ; and rich in the love of one another, the new married couple went on in their path of Christian usefulness, abounding in the work of the Lord, and heirs together of eternal life,—enforcing, both by word and deed, on all around them the great lesson of redeeming the time, of carrying their Christianity into their every-day callings, and in them abiding with God.

Now, dear readers, this is just the lesson we would teach you by this little story. Redeem the time : it is God's great gift to you ; try and realise every day that the hours are given you by God himself to spend for Him ; you can, by His grace, do this wherever you are, or however you are situated.

There is no lawful calling, however lowly or arduous, in which God cannot be served, and time be found to be a Christian. St

Paul, in plain words, tells us how to unite the business of time and eternity (for united they must be), 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'

God grant, that on the last day, when writer and readers shall alike stand before the judgment-seat, they may be enabled to say (whilst giving all the glory of their salvation to Christ alone), 'We have glorified Thee upon the earth; we have finished the work which Thou gavest us to do.'

NOTHING TO DO

CHAPTER I.

'Not many lives, but only *one* have we,
One, only one;
How sacred should that one life ever be,
That narrow span.'

'None of us liveth to himself.'—ROM. xiv. 7.

It was a mild sunny day, at that period of the year which, in Scotland at least, it is difficult to say whether, properly speaking, it is the close of Spring or early Summer.

Very brightly did the sun shine, expanding by its influence the golden drooping sprays

of the laburnums, darting amongst the rich masses of flowers which almost weighed down the lilac bushes, and tingeing with rainbow hues the spotless robe of white blossoms in which the old gean and hawthorn trees (which overlooked the pleasant garden of Fairlie House) were arrayed. A pleasanter spot, at that particular season, could hardly be imagined, more especially the spot strictly called the flower garden, shut out from the other parts by a tall hedge of holly, and appropriated solely to flowers growing in plots of many shapes, cut out of, and surrounded by, the bright green grass.

On that day, in the month of May, a young girl sat in the pleasant flower garden, on a rustic seat, under the shade of an old apple tree. She had a book in her hand, but she had ceased to read it, and sat lost in thought, now glancing at the peaceful scene around

her; now watching the little birds that twittered about, many of them flying to their nests, conveying food to little hungry bills, who were waiting anxiously their arrival; then, again, startled by the cawing of the rooks from the old rookery, distant but a short way from the garden. There was evidently great work doing in that old rookery,—work which had been done over and over again for so many, many years—baby rooks to be fed, and full fledged little ones to be taught to fly. Yes, there was no want of work, and no want of workers in the rookery—no time for *ennui* there—no weary hours with ‘nothing to do’ there.

Some such thoughts seemed to have crossed the young girl’s mind, for, rousing herself from her reverie, and unconsciously speaking aloud, she said in a tone of bitter disappointment, ‘But I have really nothing to do: no work given to me.’

The remark was overheard by a gentle looking elderly lady, who had entered the garden unnoticed, and now, laying her hand kindly on the girl's shoulder, said earnestly, 'Ah, Caroline Gordon, stop a moment, ere you allow such a thought to fill your mind. Look around at everything in nature, doing a work given it by God to do, fulfilling the end of its being, in obedience to His commands; made by Him to impart pleasure, or do good. Look at the flowers, in all their varied beauties, and thank God for the gift. Surely He uses them for His glory, that they may show forth the wonders of His handiwork. Listen to the joyous song of the birds. Are they, too, not formed to declare the wonders of the Lord? And see yon glorious sun, shedding joy and brightness around! Know you not how the darkness flies at its approach, how the flowers open up under its genial influence,

and how even the dark pine covered hills smile under its touches! And shall God use these minor things for His glory, giving unto each of them a work to do for Him, and refuse a like gift to man, whom He has created with an immortal soul, for whom He gave His well-beloved Son to die? No; it cannot be. Every human being has a work given to them to do for God—a work the doing of which was the great end of their being sent into the world. True, a Christian must never forget that he has not to work for his salvation; that work has been done for him by Christ—secured to him by His atoning blood. A Christian works not for his salvation, but out of love to Him who has saved him. Jesus has now gone away for a while, but, till His return, He has left to “every man his work.” Yes, even to you and me, dear, insignificant as we may be.'

Caroline smiled as she recognised in the speaker an old friend, granted the truth of what she said, but still added, ' Yet, Mrs Grant, it is a month to-day since I came home, and still there seems no place that I can fill; and, much as I wish it, I find nothing to do for my God and Saviour.'

Mrs Grant looked lovingly at the bright young girl, as she sat there in the glow of youth and freshness. ' I'll tell you what you've got to do, dear,' she said, taking the girl's hand in hers. ' You've got to live, and that's a very solemn thing to do. Did you ever think, Cary, on the Influence of a Life?'

Reader, did you? If not, try to realise the marvellous power which, by our lives, we exert either for good or evil on those around us. It has been said, that ' every word man's tongue hath uttered echoes in God's skies;' and in like manner, the in-

THE INFLUENCE OF A LIFE.

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fluences of our lives reach onward to eternity. Ah yes! to *live* for God is our work; and no human being is entitled to say, 'I have nothing to do.'

CHAPTER II.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord, on whom I wait.

'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?'—**ACTS**
ix. 6.

'Go work in my vineyard.'—**MATT. xxi. 28.**

CAROLINE GORDON was the eldest daughter of the proprietor of the beautiful, though not extensive, estate of Fairlie, situated in one of the lowland counties of Scotland. Her mother dying whilst she was yet a child, Caroline had lived for more than nine years with her maternal grandmother in England, knowing her brothers and sister

only by name, and seeing even her father only once a-year. Shortly before the time our story begins Caroline's grandmother had died, and Major Gordon had gone to England and brought his daughter home.

Cary, who was then seventeen, though pleased at the thoughts of seeing her brothers and sister, could not leave her English home without the deepest regret,—that home where she had spent so many happy days with her she should see no more on earth,—that home where, a year before, she had found her Saviour, to live for whose glory was now the great desire of her life.

Major Gordon's family consisted of two sons, the one two years older, and the other one year younger than Cary, and a little girl only nine years old, upon whose infant brow her mother had just been able to impress one kiss ere she breathed her last. The complete charge of the household had

now, for many years, been taken by the Major's maiden sister, Miss Gordon, a lady who had earned for herself the character of a strong-minded, but, alas! an unlovable person. Everything was done by rule, everything punctual and orderly, in the management of Fairlie House. But there was one great element of household comfort left out —there was no *love* there; not even the natural love which constitutes much of the charms of a home, binding brother to sister, father to child, and servant to mistress. And, ah! still greater want, there was none of the 'love of God which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost,'—that love which is the Christian's constraining motive in all he does.

Such was the home to which, after an absence of nine years, Caroline Gordon returned. Brought up in an atmosphere of love, with strong love to God and man

beating in her breast, no wonder that she felt chilled and disheartened, and fancied there was no place for her to fill, no work for her to do there. Ah, she wished to do great things for God, but forgot that God can be served in little as well as in great things—forgot, or had never thought of, the Influence of a Life.

In Mrs Grant, an old friend of her mother's, who had often visited her grandmother, Cary found a wise adviser; and after a long conversation with her on the day we have spoken of, she went in with a lightened heart to begin, by the grace of God, a new course of life—to find out the work given her to do, and to endeavour, by a holy consistent Christian life, to win souls to Christ.

We must here give a short sketch of the characters of those amongst whom her work was to be carried on.

Major Gordon was a highly respected county gentleman; his clear mind, and talent for business, causing his opinion to be regarded as an authority in county affairs, in which he took deep interest. As a magistrate, his sentences were ever regarded as strictly just and unprejudiced. In private life, none could accuse him of being either a harsh father or severe master. To his sons he had given a liberal education, and intended giving the same to his little daughter Fanny, whilst Caroline, though not brought up in her own home, had had, in money matters, a full allowance from her father. No servant could complain of injustice or constant fault-finding from him, far from it, he would have condescended to no such thing; but they well knew, that an order once disobeyed, a hasty reply once given, was never pardoned, and they must quit; but this once understood, and no servant

need have complained of their treatment at Fairlie House. What, then, was the great defect in his character? Want of love, want of forbearance, want of sympathy with those around him; characteristics much the same as those which marked his sister, though less disagreeable in the man than the woman. And what of his religious character? Alas, religion was to him but a form—not that he was an unbeliever; a doubt of the truth of Christianity had never crossed his mind. Every Sabbath found him with his family seated in the house of God; every communion season found him at the table of the Lord; but in these outward observances his religion consisted. Of the power of the Holy Spirit to change the heart of man, of the preciousness of the atoning blood of Christ, of the power of religion to influence the thoughts and actions in every-day life, he knew nothing. Religion in

Fairlie House was a thing belonging only to the Sabbath, and that day was regarded there as one to be dreaded—as a day of weariness; rather than what to the true Christian it must ever be, the green oasis in the wilderness of the world—the day of rest.

Frederick Gordon, the eldest son, was being educated as an advocate, and had for two years spent six months of the year in Edinburgh. He was a clever studious lad, somewhat grave for his years; the effect, no doubt, of the way in which he had been brought up, for, as far as lay in her power, Miss Gordon had studiously repressed all childish folly, as she called the natural merriment of youth. At first sight a stranger would have said that Frederick resembled his father, possessing, though in a slighter degree, the same stern, inflexible look; but a close observer would have remarked a

depth of thought, and a mild expression in the deep blue eye, such as Major Gordon never had. Yes, and could one have read the heart, they would have found in Frederick a chafing at the coldness and want of sympathy of those around him, a yearning for love, and sometimes even an aspiration after higher things. True, as yet that aspiration was undefined, produced only by the power which the beauties of nature exercised on a sensitive mind, leading him to regard these beauties as the work of the Lord, whilst he was yet far from being able to say, '*My God, my God.*' Such was Frederick Gordon when he came home for the Summer, soon after his sister's arrival.

Of Charles and Fanny there is not much to say. Charles was to be a merchant, his father having obtained the promise of an opening for him in a large mercantile house in Liverpool; but, in the meantime, he went

so many hours a-day as a clerk in a bank in the county town of D——, not three miles distant from Fairlie House. Charles inherited in a large measure the character of his mother, whose greatest fault had been a want of decision, and a fear of offending, which often led her into yielding her own opinions, even when she knew they were right, and thus being blindly led by others. This fault in Charles' character was, of course, increased by the little allowances made in his home for childish errors, thus leading him to conceal his true feelings, and made him but too liable, when mixing with those of his own age, to be led astray.

Fanny was a silent, reserved child, brought up completely according to her aunt's ideas of propriety,—taught to think before she spoke; impressed with the idea, that to show curiosity upon any subject

was unfit for a child ; and believing that the worst fault she could commit was to be seen with untidy hair, or a spot on her frock. Yet, for all that, there were kind good seeds in Fanny's young heart, waiting only for some gentle hand to stir them, and cause them, by the grace of God, to spring up.

Reader, what sort of influence, think you, will Caroline exercise on her cold, somewhat stern father; her severe, unsympathising aunt; her brothers, entering manhood, with all its temptations, with no higher guide than their own inclinations, with no fear of God before their eyes to restrain them from evil; and on her young sister, who had never known a mother's love, never had had one friend to whom she could confide either her childish joys or sorrows, never been spoken to of a loving Saviour, who begs 'the little one to come to Him ?'

We shall see. True, she is but an instrument in the hands of God ; but He who hath said, ' no man liveth to himself,' said also, ' My people have I formed for Myself, to show forth My praise.'

CHAPTER III.

‘Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as to Thee.’

‘Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’—
1 COR. x. 31.

IT was not to be expected that the influence of Caroline Gordon’s Christian life was to effect a great or immediate change on the lives of those around her. Far from it. For many a day it was only in little things, in trifling matters, that any change could be observed; and often did Cary’s heart sink within her as she felt how little was done. Still she persevered in the way of duty, and learned more to leave the result

with God. She prayed earnestly that she might be used for His glory, then went calmly on her way, assured that as God was the hearer, He was also the answerer, of prayer.

The drawing-room at Fairlie House was a pleasant room, with its large bow windows looking out on the tastefully laid out shrubbery, beyond which stretched out an extensive lawn, dotted over with some fine old trees, and intersected by a briskly flowing rivulet, on the banks of which many willow trees grew, concealing, in several places, the waters of the rivulet with their long drooping branches, the surface of which was skimmed by their silvery grey leaves. But pleasant as the look-out from the room was, Cary felt chilled by the appearance of its interior, so still, so formal it was—sofas placed against one side of the room, and chairs ranged with their backs to the wall on the other side, looking as if

they were never meant to be moved, giving one the impression as if they were chained to their places ; a table in the centre, with no books nor ornaments to relieve it—just a table to be looked at—put there merely to fill up room ; then a grand piano at the foot of the room, with a wax-cloth cover, which never was taken off.

Reader, haven't you seen the sort of room, and felt when you were in it, as if you, too, would soon turn as stiff and formal as the furniture, if you remained long there ?

Cary did, and one of her first endeavours was to alter the appearance of this room, to make it look more attractive, in the hopes that by so doing she might be able to get all the members of the house drawn more together, might induce her father and brothers to spend their evenings there, instead of retiring, as was their custom, immediately after tea, to their own rooms, on

the plea of study. It was wonderful how many difficulties lay in the way of her effecting even this small improvement in household matters.

When she ventured to suggest to Miss Gordon that she had a few books, and some ornamental nick-nacks, which she would like to put in the drawing-room, as she thought they would improve it, she was met with the sharp question, 'if she thought the room required to be improved? It had been thought good enough for years. She wasn't sure there was a handsomer drawing-room in the country, every one that saw it said so.'

'So it is,' said Cary, 'a very handsome room; but I think I could make it look better. Don't you think if I were to gather a flower, and put it into that glass, it would look nice?'

Well, Miss Gordon allowed that might

be as well: there often was a flower in it, but she could not do everything.

In the end Cary got a somewhat ungracious leave to deck the room up a bit, if she liked; 'only remember, that glass was not to be broken, it was a very valuable one.'

Cary was not long in availing herself of the permission, and in a short time the change she had made was wonderful. The sofas were pulled forward, and arranged in better places; the chairs were set here and there, through the room; the table was covered with a handsome crimson cloth, which one of the servants brought, saying, 'Miss Gordon said she might put that on, if she liked.'

In the centre of the table, on a pretty mat, stood the pure white glass, tastefully dressed with flowers, and on the table some prettily bound books were laid. On a side

table two beautiful statuettes (a present to Cary from her grandmother) were placed, along with some Indian ornaments, and a writing book. And when the curtains were gracefully arranged, and the piano opened, the room wore quite a different appearance and Cary was well rewarded for her trouble by seeing the look of surprise and pleasure which crossed the face of her brother Frederick, as he entered the room just as she was putting the finishing stroke. He had only returned home a few days before, and he and Cary had, as yet, held little converse, hardly even having met except at meals.

Now he went up to her quite frankly, and declared she must deal in magic. She had changed the room so much, it was really nice, quite different to what it used to be; and, glancing at the piano, he said, 'Cary, that has never been opened since our mother

died. Don't you sing? I must say I like music, and never a note do I hear of it here. I wish you would sing to me to-day.'

'If you could only remain after tea, I'll try and sing then; only,' and tears stood in her eyes as she said it, 'I have never sung since grandmamma's death.'

'Oh,' said her brother, 'I forgot; and you liked her very much. Cary, you'll find nobody to like here. You could not, if you tried ever so hard. I defy any human being to like aunt, she is so cold; and as to our father—'

'Oh! hush,' said Cary, putting her hand on her brother's lips, 'are they not the relations God has given to us? We must try to love them, to help them, and be their comfort. We must remember they are not young, like us.'

'Young!' answered Frederick, with a sneer. 'Aunt never was young in her life, I

believe. And as to our father, I was only going to say, that he won't let any person like him; he repels you. But I confess he has always been a liberal, just father to me. I would like him if he would let me, but he won't, that's all; and, Cary, you'll feel it all by and by, and own that I'm right. Do what you like, you'll find it impossible to care for any one in this house.'

'No, I won't. God helping me, I mean to love every one in the house.'

Her brother looked at her with an incredulous smile. 'Well, if you do, you must be an angel, that is all. I wonder where you'll begin?'

'With you,' she said, laughing.

He shook his head. 'No, Cary, I won't believe it; nobody ever loved me in my life. I used to fancy even mother cared more for Charles. But I must be off now. Yes, of course I'll stay and hear you sing to-night.'

You know the story of study is all stuff; only, how could one bear to stay in this room at night with aunt? Cary, I tell you, I wish for your own sake you had not to live here.'

'I don't, Frederick,' she said. 'I am glad to be home. Perhaps God has a work for me to do here.'

'Do you always think of God about everything?' he asked, in a grave tone.

'I try to do so,' she said, fixing her eyes on her brother; 'and we may love Him, Frederick, and be quite sure He will not repel us.'

'Perhaps not. I don't know that I've tried *that*. But I can't stop now;' and so saying he left the room.

Trivial as the events related in this chapter may seem, is it not possible that they were the beginning of the 'Influence of a Life?' Let no one despise the day of small things

CHAPTER IV.

‘Shall I see the roses blooming,
And not wish to bloom as they?
Holy fragrance round me throwing,
Luring others on the way.’

‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’—MATT. v. 16.

SOME months after the conversation related in the last chapter, any one who had spent an evening in former days at Fairlie House, peeping into the drawing-room, and taking a glance at what was going on, would have been much surprised at the change; no formality there now, no gloomy looks, unless it be those of an elderly lady, who sits at the table availing herself of the light of a

handsome lamp to knit her stocking by. She certainly does look very severe; still she glances not unkindly, every now and then, at a merry group of young people at the piano at the foot of the room.

That group consists of Cary Gordon, who is seated at the piano, looking very pretty—her black dress, with low made body, showing off the whiteness of her neck, down which her chestnut coloured hair fell in graceful ringlets, and her expressive blue eyes turned with a look of love, first to one then to another of her brothers, who stood one on each side of her.

Presently a song was begun, a simple English song, in which both brothers took part, whilst a bright looking little girl stood beside them, glancing up at her sister, lost in admiration.

The door opened, and Major Gordon entered, but his presence did not seem to inti-

midate the singers, although he came and stood beside them, asking, when it was finished, for a Scotch one, adding, 'A good Scotch song is worth all the English and Italian ones that ever were invented.'

The music over, the piano was carefully closed, and a large family Bible was laid on the table, the bell rung, and, in a few minutes, all the inmates of Fairlie House were bending their knees to the God of all the earth, seeking forgiveness of their sins for the sake of the Lord Jesus. The lifting up of their hands was as the evening incense. True, a stranger might have wondered why the young girl, instead of the head of the house, conducted the devotions; but few could have guessed how thankful Cary felt when she obtained her father's permission to have prayers morning and evening, provided that she chose to read herself.

Yes, a change had passed on many things and people in Fairlie House since the day that Cary had said, ' I have nothing to do.' Humbly and prayerfully had she, since then, striven to do the will of God, sought in little things to show forth the praises of the Lord, and to lead the souls of those around her to Jesus; using all means, whilst well knowing that it is the Holy Spirit alone can send the arrow of conviction to any soul. And a blessing had, in many ways, rested on her work. Her influence had softened, if not changed, the sternness of both her father and aunt, had warmed the heart of her little sister, and made both her brothers happier and more social in their home; whilst the servants boldly declared she was just a blessing to the whole house, with her cheery ways and kind words.

And 'Bless her,' said the old cook; 'she's

ane o' the Lord's ain people, if onybody is. Little enough we heard o' Him or His word till she cam hame. She is a livin' epistle that we a' can read.'

Nobody ever heard Cary say now she had 'nothing to do.' Ah, no! she had found her work both in her own home and in those of the poor. Yet she always found time to ride with her brothers, walk with her father, or drive into the town to shop with her aunt, when wished. The great secret of her influence lay in this—she was a follower of Him who 'pleased not Himself.'

The month of November had come. The pleasant garden was desolate now, the gorgeous hues of the Autumn foliage had faded, and the brown sered leaves fell fast, and strewed the ground. And, as if in unison with nature, Cary, too, was feeling dreary, trying hard to keep back her tears, as she stood alone with her brother in the

drawing-room, waiting for the dog-cart to drive up, which was to take him into D—, to catch the mail-coach to Edinburgh, to which place he was returning for the winter session.

‘Well, Cary,’ he was saying, ‘so you really are sorry I’m going away? It does seem odd; nobody ever used to care about it. But I must say you’ve made me sorry about leaving home, which I never used to do. It is a different place altogether since you came to it. And you are not unhappy, Cary, either. I can’t think how you’ve managed it. I thought you’d have died of misery here.’

‘But I did not, Frederick,’ she said, trying to smile. ‘You see, I told you I’d find plenty people to love, and so I have. I love you all, even aunt.’

Well, I don’t understand it, that’s all. I wish you’d teach me your secret.’

'I wish you would ask God to teach you. I'm sure when we learn to love Him, He teaches us to love others. Oh, Frederick, I wish you could say truly, *My God, my Saviour!*' She stopped, her very earnestness choking her voice; never before had she spoken so personally on religious subjects to her brother.

He took her hand kindly. 'I sometimes wish I could say it also, but I cannot yet; perhaps never shall. All I can say is, I never wished to do so till I felt the influence of a Christian life. God bless you, Cary. There's the dog-cart, and my father's waiting.'

He was off, and for a moment Cary stood. Mrs Grant's words were ringing in her ears, 'Cary, did you ever think on the Influence of a Life?' Would God use her as the means of leading this brother to Jesus? oh! if He only would.

CHAPTER V.

• Now in thy youth beseech of Him
Who giveth, upbraiding not,
That His light in thy heart become not dim,
And His love be unforget.
And thy God, in the darkest of days, will be
Greenness, and beauty, and strength to thee.'

• Suffer little children to come unto Me, and for-
bid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.'—
LUKE xviii. 16.

To no one in the house had Caroline Gor-
don's return home been a greater blessing
than to little Fanny. At first she could
hardly understand what it was to have a
sister, could scarcely believe that she might
tell her everything she felt, and be sure of
her sympathy either in her joys or her
childish sorrows. Great was her surprise

when, one day, she saw Cary busy dressing a doll, and was told it was for her. 'For me!' she said, in a tone of delight. 'Are you taking all that trouble for me? Why do you do it?'

'To give you pleasure, dear. Because I thought you would like it. Isn't it nice, Fanny, to try to give others pleasure?'

Fanny hung her head. Poor child, she had never been taught to care for any one but herself,—never been taught the grand lesson of unselfish love. To teach her that was her sister's great aim.

It was all like a new life to the child. By all means Cary tried to win her love, and was not long in succeeding. Many a pleasant walk she took her, striving to make her notice the beauties of everything around her; leading her to see in them all the hand of God; teaching her to express her thoughts and feelings freely; taking her

often into the cottages of the poor, thus leading her to think of, and care for, the wants of others.

Their favourite walk was across a thickly wooded hill to the cottage of an old woman, who was confined to bed, and often left alone all day. Oh the pleasure of that walk to Fanny! She learned to love the wood, darting about in a perfect ecstasy of joy, now pulling some of the numerous wild flowers that grew there, forming them, with Cary's assistance, into a nosegay for poor Jenny; then, again, solemnised by the quiet around, as, seated by her sister's side, they rested under the shade of some fine old tree; now watching the sunbeams darting through the leaves, or listening to the gentle rustling of the trees, as a slight breeze arose; now wondering at the cause of the different sounds they heard—those indescribable sounds which constitute a

great part of the charm of a wood. And what an exquisite delight there is at almost any season of the year in a large wood, more especially, perhaps, in Spring, when the fresh green of the young leaves contrast so beautifully with the foliage of the dark evergreen firs, and the wild primroses, wood anemonies and hyacinths carpet the ground; or in Autumn, when every tree seems clothed in different coloured robes, some dark and gloomy, others of the most brilliant hues of orange and scarlet—yes, all the works of God are beautiful, but it seems to me as if nowhere is the presence of God felt so near as in His woods. How often has one felt the truth of the poet's words,

‘Solemn and silent everywhere,
Nature, with folded hands, seems there
Kneeling at her evening prayer,
Like one in prayer I stood.’

There could be no doubt that these walks,

and the thoughts they gave rise to, were good for the child, calling out emotions of love to the Maker of this beautiful world; and as she stood with her sister by the bedside of the poor woman, and heard her read and speak of the great love of Jesus, and of His power and willingness to save all who sought Him; of the joy of being one of His people, and working for Him—as she listened to these things, and saw the joy which beamed in her sister's face as she spoke, the child wished that she, too, belonged to Christ; that she, too, might live for Him. And the dread of religion, which she used to feel, passed away when she thought of Jesus.

The good seed was sown, and begun to spring up—one day, by the grace of God, to be perfected, and bring forth fruit.

And during all this period, what of the growth of grace in Cary's own soul? There

is no standing still in the Christian life; it is always a growing in grace, a being made more 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' And in many ways Cary felt that the religious life of her soul was advancing. Many and many a sore struggle she had with indwelling sin; many an effort to submit patiently to the exacting commands of her aunt; many an impatient feeling, at being so completely hindered from taking any charge of her father's household affairs, which, as his eldest daughter, she thought was her right; but by degrees these feelings were subdued, and she felt she was growing in patience, seeing, even in little things, the hand of her God, whilst she was learning more to feel that Jesus was a real friend, to whom she could tell all her difficulties, and whose advice she could seek, even as she had done that of her grandmother's whilst she was alive.

It is a great thing for us all to learn to know Jesus in his character of 'Counsellor;' a great thing when the withdrawing of earthly love leads us, as in Cary's case, to throw ourselves more on the love of Him who first loved us.

CHAPTER VI.
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'Let no one say his lamp doth burn too dim,
In this dark world the Lord hath need of him.'

'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least
of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'—
MATT. xxv. 40.

Few events of importance occurred to break
the quite monotony of the life at Fairlie
House. Every day brought its own duties
and also its own pleasures. Few visitors
came to break the usual routine; whilst some
formal dinner parties, given and returned,
constituted the amount of gaiety entered
into. To those dinner parties Cary was al-
ways required to go, as Miss Gordon had
ceased to care for dining out; and, to say

the truth, many of these parties were a great weariness to Cary. And no wonder, as most of the people were strangers to her, and it certainly requires us to care a great deal for the friends, to dine with whom we have to drive some eight or ten miles, returning the same distance on, perhaps, a cold winter night. However, Major Gordon seemed to enjoy them, and, for his sake, Cary tried to do so also, whilst her pleasant manners and cheerful spirit made her soon a favourite with all.

With deep interest did Mrs Grant observe the influence that Cary was exerting on those around her by her Christian life, and that influence was far wider extended than Cary herself had any idea of. One case in particular came under Mrs Grant's notice, about three years after Cary's return home. Whilst visiting one day in some cottages in a thickly populated village,

Mrs Grant entered one, the particular neatness and comfortable appearance of which pleased her much. A nicely dressed young woman sat, busied in making very neatly a baby's frock, whilst with her foot she rocked the cradle, where lay a sleeping infant of some six weeks old. After some conversation Mrs Grant praised the tidiness of the house, and remarked on the neatness of the frock she was making, adding, 'I am sure it is a great matter when young mothers can cut out and make their own dresses. I only wish the young girls in this village were taught to do so, for what sort of wives can we expect them to make, when they are not able even to mend their own or their husband's clothes properly.'

The young woman coloured slightly, as she said, 'I'm trying, ma'am, to teach some of them. There's six young girls come to me every night, and I teach them to mend,

and to cut out little pinafores and frocks; and I hope, by and by, to get them taught to make their own wrappers, and even a common shirt. You see, ma'am, I feel so much the good of having been taught myself, that I am anxious to be able to teach others; and I like to do it, for, as the young lady at Fairlie House used to say, "There's a great pleasure in helping others."

'Did you know Miss Gordon, then?' said Mrs Grant. 'She is a great friend of mine. I am sure she would give you good advice.'

'Know her, ma'am?' and the young woman's face brightened as she spoke. 'I owe her more than I do anybody. Every good thing I know she taught me. You see, ma'am, it's about three years ago since she came home. Well, at that time I was living with an aunt at one of the cottages near Fairlie. I was eighteen years old then, and was engaged to be married to John Lonie

(him that's now my husband), and a good working, well living lad he was; but as to me, though I liked him, I was noways fit to be his wife, for you see I had not had much schooling; and as to sewing, I could hardly do more than just hem. Well, one day Miss Gordon came into our cottage, and sat down and talked so pleasant like, that I just told her all about myself, not concealing from her how little I knew. She listened, quite interested like, and then asked me if I would like to be taught. I told her that was impossible. I was too old to go to school; besides, I was out at work in the fields most of the day. Well, I was quite taken aback when she asked me if I could manage to come up to the big House for an hour every night, from six till seven, she would be happy to teach me herself. She was a good worker, she said, having been well taught, and could cut out nicely.

Well, ma'am, you may believe I didn't wait for a second asking, because you see I really wanted to learn, to fit me to be a good wife to John. So for two years I went every week night, and Miss Gordon taught me herself to cut out and sew, and also to write, and some other girls about, hearing of me learning, wanted to come too, and so Miss Gordon was quite glad to have them; and about eight of us used always to go. Then when we were working she used to read to us always some good book. Once a-week the cook would show us how to make some broth, and some other simple things; for, you see, Miss Gordon said it was a great thing for the like of us to know how to do these things, so that when we had houses of our own, we could make them nice for our husbands. Many a man, said she, would be kept away from the public-house if their wives took a little more trouble to cook

their dinners nicely, however little there might be for them. Nor was that all she did for us. Every Sabbath night she used to have us up to the House too, and taught us Bible lessons. 'Deed, ma'am, you'll think I'm telling you too much, but I never weary speaking of Miss Gordon; for, you see, she was just the means of saving me. I had no thought about my soul or my Saviour till she spoke to me. But her words just went right to my heart, and now I'm changed altogether, and feel as if I could never do enough, or care enough, for Him who died for me. But, you see, I owe it, under God, all to Miss Gordon; and there's never a night John and I don't pray for her. There's many a poor man, I'm thinking, 'ill bless her for what she's taught his wife.'

Mrs Grant was much pleased with this simple story, and after some words of ad-

vice, and promising to send some common work for her class to do, she left, reflecting, on her way home, on the Influence and the great responsibility of a Life, and how influence exerted on one person extends through them to others, who, again, exert it on others, and so on, until time is swallowed up in eternity. Oh, solemn thought! may it enter into our hearts, and, by the blessing of God, make us take heed how we live.

CHAPTER VII.

‘ I was a wandering child,
I once preferred to roam,
But now I love my Father’s voice.
I love, I love my home.’

‘ Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth?’—JER. iii. 4.

It was a September day, the sun, which still retained a great deal of power, tempering the keenness of the air, lighting up the bright coloured foliage, which already had put on the autumnal garb, glistering on the sheaves of golden corn, as the labourers threw them on the carts to be taken away to the farm-yard. It was, in short, just one of those bright days one so often has in Scotland in the month of September,

a day on which everything looks charming, a day when even wearied sad hearts throw off for a while their gloom, and seem to rejoice with the rejoicing nature around them, when the labourers whistle at their work—when the farmers' hearts are gladdened by contemplating the heavy laden carts, as they are brought into the farm-yards—when little children shout with joy as they pick up the scattered ears of corn ; and when the sportsmen are off by break of day to the hills in search of game. It was a day that seemed to invite every one to come out of doors and enjoy the fine weather whilst it lasted, and yet the inmates of Fairlie House seemed to have no such intentions ; all were too busy there, even so much as to think of a walk.

In the dining-room busy hands were at work, shaping, sewing, knitting, Miss Gordon superintending, planning, ordering,

whilst her hands were occupied with a pair of stockings. Her maid assisted Cary at shaping; and even little Fanny was busy too. It was evident some great event was stirring in the usually quiet household.

And so there was. Charles was going away. The opening in the Liverpool house had come at last, and Major Gordon had received a letter from his friend Mr G., requesting that Charlie would fill the vacant post in less than a month. All, therefore, was bustle and work. It was the first real home-leaving—the first one of the family that had really been launched out in the world.

Major Gordon was much pleased at the appointment, as it was a good provision for his second son, and was most liberal in his allowance for his outfit; whilst Miss Gordon and Cary, on their parts, were determined that their share in the business, the mak-

ing of shirts and knitting of stockings, should be well done. And thus occupied, the fine September day, inviting as it was, had not power to lure them away from their work, which had then to be completed in four days.

And what of Charlie? What were his feelings on leaving, for the first time, the home of his childhood? Some four years before, and he would have hailed the day of leaving home as the happiest of his life. Now it was far otherwise. Home, since Cary's return, was a changed place; and Charlie, now twenty years of age, was a changed lad since then. His sister's influence on him had been most beneficial. The quiet, yet firm way in which she persevered in the path of duty, even when surrounded by so many obstacles, her clear distinctions between what was right and what was wrong, made a great impression

upon him, whilst she, seeing at once the weak part of her brother's character, strove to make him more decided, to teach him the great lesson of saying No—that lesson which, if said on the right side, is of so much consequence to a young man. For more than a year past she had had reason to believe that the lesson had not been in vain. He now expressed his own views more firmly, was not so easily led astray, nor inclined to think that every new opinion he heard from his companions was the right one. But the greatest change of all was the change on his views of religion. The God who, up to a year of his leaving home, he had hardly ever thought of, whose commands he had slighted, whose Sabbath-days he had often broken, and always regarded as wearisome; the Saviour, whose holy life, and whose wondrous death he had so often read, and yet so little regarded; were now

felt to be his best friends. That God he had so slighted was now the Guide of his youth; that Saviour was now become to him, as to all that believe, 'precious.' And when questioned as to the cause of the change, his only reply was, he 'believed that, under God, he owed it to the influence which the life of his sister had exercised upon him; not,' he would say, 'that she was always speaking to me about being a Christian, but I could not help seeing how she lived; and that was more to me than twenty sermons. She never concealed that her motive in everything she did was to glorify God; she did not hide her light under a bushel, but let it shine brightly all around, not to lead people to praise her, but to glorify her Father in heaven.'

Such was the account that Charlie gave to Mrs Grant of the way in which he had been led to God. To few strangers would

he have said so much, for he was shy of expressing his feelings; but all the young people at Fairlie House loved and spoke freely to Mrs Grant.

As the day of his departure drew near, Cary remarked that Charlie became restless and unhappy, appearing as if there was something he wished to say, and yet could not make up his mind to do so. At last, during a quiet walk they were taking together, he told her the cause—‘a debt incurred at billiards four years before—just before you came home, Cary. My only excuse is, I was young, and easily led astray. I had no right principle to guide me, and bad companions took advantage of me. I’ve tried hard to pay it up, but have never been able; and instead of getting less, it has gone on increasing, for Philips, who is the person I owe, has put on high interest every year, and now it is the sum of ten

pounds; and how I am to pay it I know not. I could save it off the allowance my father is now going to give me, but Philips insists on my paying him at once. I know I need not tell you it is the last scrape of the kind I'll get into. I have not played for three years; and I hope now I have a strong Helper, who will not let me fall into temptation.'

Cary might have told him he ought never to have played at all, knowing well that was a thing his father had strictly forbidden; but she saw that Charlie felt that now, and needed to be comforted rather than condemned, to be helped rather than blamed. The right way was plain to her at once, but she only wished her brother would see it, and propose it himself; but he did not. Perhaps he knew it, but had not courage to follow it, for Charlie had many faults yet to struggle against.

Again, after a while, he repeated his question—‘Cary, what should I do?’

‘There is but one thing you can do,’ she said kindly. ‘Can you doubt one minute what it is?’

He coloured violently, as he answered, ‘I might have known you would think so; but, Cary, I *can’t* tell my father. He will make no allowance for my fault, and will regard it not as a past, but a present one. Oh, Cary, he can be so stern, I could not tell him.’

‘And yet, Charlie, if you would do what is right, what your duty to God leads you to do, you must tell him. I can give you no other advice; and if I could, your own good sense would lead you to see it was wrong to do so. Besides, our father is not nearly so stern as he used to be; and I think if he sees you are not afraid of him, he will be pleased.’

By this time they had arrived at their own door, and they parted, Charlie saying 'he would think the matter over.' And he did; and after asking God's help, went to his father's study and told him all.

He listened quietly, looking his son sharply in the face as he spoke, and when he had concluded, sat still some minutes without saying a word, turning the subject over in his mind, judging his son as he would have judged a criminal at the bar. At last he rose, walked to his desk, took out a ten pound note, and placed it in Charlie's hand. Then he said, 'Let the past be forgotten, or only remembered as a warning for the future. You say you have resolved never to play at billiards again, see that you keep your resolution. Had you told me all frankly at once, it would have been better, but your doing so even now has pleased me. Why should

a son be afraid to own his faults to his father?’

Charles’ heart was too full to say much, or fully to express his thanks; but false praise he would not receive. ‘My telling you all was by Cary’s advice. I have to thank her for much that is good.’

Major Gordon’s face brightened as he heard his daughter’s name mentioned. ‘I am glad you took her advice,’ he said. ‘Follow her example as much as you can in all things, my boy, and it will be well for you: she has been a blessing to us all.’

With a glad heart Charles rushed to his sister, and told her all. Her eyes filled with tears of sympathy and pleasure as he spoke.

‘It is so good, so right, in papa to forgive you so freely, and act so handsomely. Oh, Charles, I always thought papa’s sternness was not so real as it appeared.’

At last Charles was off, embarked on the voyage of life ; 'but, thank God,' his sister said, 'not without an everlasting Friend to guide the helm, and pilot his bark through the shoals and dangers which encompassed it.'

'Ah, Cary,' he had said at parting, 'you can hardly think how much I owe to you, or how great an Influence your Life has had on me.'

Once again Mrs Grant's words sounded in her ears,—'Did you ever think of the Influence of a Life?' Was it possible that God had used her as the instrument of her brother's conversion ? He had said so, and she must not doubt it ; and throwing herself on her knees, in the quiet of her own room, she returned thanks to God that He had used her for His glory—returned thanks to Him for the great gift of life.

CHAPTER VIII.

• Whatever passes as a cloud between
The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
Causing that brighter world to disappear,
To seem less lovely, and its hope less dear,
This is our idol, though it wear
Affection's impress, or devotion's air.'

'Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.'—EPH. vi. 13.

IT was a cold evening in the month of December, the short twilight had long given place to the darkness of night, illumined, however, by a bright moon, over which there passed, every now and then, sailing white clouds, clouds which betokened that the slight sprinkling of snow which covered the ground, might be increased ere day-

light. Very peaceful looked everything around Fairlie House on that evening. The old house stood out clearly in the moonlight, seeming all the darker and more striking, rising from the white covered earth, whilst the background of dark fir trees, silvered with a slight coating of snow, were lighted up by the pale moonbeams. All seemed to speak of rest and peace. Every sound was hushed; birds and beasts were alike sunk in repose, undisturbed by anxious cares, taking no heed for the morrow; only man was awake. Only in the heart of man was there bitterness and sorrow. The gentle moonbeams stole quietly into many a room in the wide world that night. They played on the pillows of the dying, reminding them of that city which needeth not the light of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, to which they were hastening. They entered

the narrow grating of the prison, and shone on the criminal, as he sat in dogged despair, speaking to him, could he but have understood it, of the wonders of the Lord —telling that there was forgiveness to be found with Him. They comforted the mother, as she watched by the bed of her sick child. They lightened up many a darkened home, and spoke peace to many a troubled heart. They also shone into the little room in Fairlie House which Caroline Gordon called her Boudoir. Many a night had Cary watched them as they flitted about that little room, but now they are unnoticed and unheeded by her. She had withstood a great temptation, gone through a great struggle, and was suffering a great sorrow. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak, and now, the trial past, she was weeping bitterly. Yes, bitterly, but not alone; her head was resting on the

shoulder of her brother Frederick, and his strong arm was thrown protectingly around her. Six years had elapsed since Cary had returned to her home.

One year before the evening we write of Miss Gordon had died suddenly. What influence the life of Cary had exercised over her it is difficult to say. Outwardly there was not much change, and Cary, as she bent over her cold dead face, groaned in spirit as she felt she knew not if her trust had been in Christ—knew not if she dare say of her, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' Yes, and by that bed of death Cary vowed to be more earnest than ever in seeking to live for her God, in striving to win the souls of those around her to Jesus.

Awful thought, that thousands and thousands of immortal beings are living and dying without one thought of their God, or of that eternity to which they are hasten-

ing! The way of salvation through Christ is so plain that a child can understand it. The offer of a free salvation is held out to every one, and yet, men are so taken up with the things that perish, that their God is forgotten, their Saviour slighted, till the solemn unlooked for summons comes—
‘Arise, and come to judgment.’

Some months after Miss Gordon’s death Frederick returned from Edinburgh, to remain some time at home, and brought with him an old friend of Cary’s, Frank Mansfield, the proprietor of an estate in Devonshire, near the pleasant home where Cary had spent her young days.

Frank Mansfield was about thirty years of age, good looking, and pleasant. His tastes were cultivated and refined; he had mixed a great deal in the highest society, while a four years residence in foreign countries had given ease and polish to his

manners. He greeted Cary as an old and favourite companion, bringing to her remembrance many of their childish exploits, and reminding her of many happy days. He interested Frederick with his vivid descriptions of the countries and people which he had visited, and won golden opinions from Major Gordon by consulting him about some alterations he was making on his property, and interesting himself in the Major's account of the way in which county business was transacted in Scotland. Nor in so ingratiating himself with all parties was Frank Mansfield acting a part, far from it. To find out, and interest himself in the pursuits of those around him, to find pleasure for himself in pleasing others, seemed a part of Frank's nature, a nature in which there was much that was good, noble, and loveable, but which, alas! of late years, a cold scepticism had blighted, and

ere long, but for the grace of God, would blast and destroy for ever. This scepticism was, however, so well concealed, and the politeness of his manners hindering him from bringing forward opinions so opposed to those around, that to many even of his own friends it remained unknown. No wonder, then, that even after a visit of some weeks continuance, his religious sentiments were unknown to Cary. In the family worship (still conducted by Cary) he had always outwardly joined; the Sabbath he also kept, in appearance at least.

No one in Fairlie House, unless we except Frederick, who had some suspicion of it, guessed that their pleasant visitor was of the unhappy number of those who say in their hearts, 'There is no God.' Nay, more, had any one said so to Frank himself, he would have so far denied it, saying, he believed in a Universal God—a God who in

some mysterious manner pervaded the whole of nature; but as to a God who knew and watched over every one of His creatures—a God who counts the hairs of our heads,—a God who cared so much for the creatures He had made, that to save them from eternal death He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to death for them. In short, as to the God of the Bible, Frank Mansfield denied and ignored such a Being; and yet, wondrous grace, the Lord did not ignore him—did not smite him to the ground, as his sins deserved. No; even he was to be a trophy of sovereign grace, a jewel in the Redeemer's Crown. His voice was to sing the loudest the praises of the Lamb, in that land where they cease not day nor night singing, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.' Yes, even he was to proclaim the Influence of a Life.

CHAPTER IX.

Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, or loved and known;
Yet, how rich is my condition,
Christ and heaven are still my own.'

What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?'—2 Cor. vi. 15.

'Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.'—2 Cor. ii. 14.

VERY pleasantly did the six weeks of Frank Mansfield's visit pass to Cary, his conversation was so agreeable, his tastes so similar to her own, his attention to her so courteous. True, at times the painful thought flashed on her mind that he cared not as he ought about the things of God;

but as to his being an unbeliever, no such idea had entered her mind.

Over the details of Cary's feelings at this time we will not linger. It was the old tale of love blinding her to faults which, in others, she would have clearly seen. For a while the things of time were dimming her eyes, and preventing her from seeing clearly the things of eternity. For a while—for we write of no perfect character—the creature was occupying the place due only to the Creator: the love that was filling her heart was an unblessed one, for it was not in the Lord. Well for poor Cary that an eye of love was watching her, an arm of Omnipotence upholding her, so that, though her steps were faltering, she fell not.

It was Frank Mansfield's last Sunday at Fairlie House, and the conversation turned on the subject of a sermon they had heard

that afternoon, 'On the peace and joy in believing.'

Cary was eloquent in praise of the sermon and the greatness of the subject. Looking up, she saw a sneer of contempt on the face of Frank, which changed instantly on meeting her eye, though the words almost involuntarily escaped his lips, 'Yes, very great, if only it were true.'

'If only it were true!' For one moment Cary repeated the words, as if to take in their full meaning; one other moment, and she saw it all. The hand of God dispelled the mist, and Frank Mansfield stood before her an unbeliever, without God, and without hope.

Few can rightly understand the severity of the shock, few enter into the bitterness of the struggle carried on that night by Cary in the quiet of her own room. It was a struggle between the old and the new

man, between Christ and Satan, but in which, as always, Christ was the victor; and Cary Gordon rose from her knees strengthened to bear whatever was before her, prepared to give up everything rather than her Saviour; and the trial came sooner than she expected.

The next day Frank asked her to become his wife. She told him it could not be, and gave the reason—he did not serve the God she served, did not love the Saviour she loved.

He acknowledged it all, nay, told her his real views; but yet he urged her to become his, quoting in his favour the very words of the Bible he despised, 'That the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife;' and again, 'What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?' He told her of the power that she had over him, reminded her of a conversation that

they had had on the Influence of a Life.
But in vain.

Cary had but one answer—a holy influence could never be exercised, if, in order to do so, you left the path of duty. The word of God said, ‘Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.’

He told her he knew she loved him. She could not deny it, and in the very strength of that love she besought him to turn to his God, to seek forgiveness through Christ, ere it was too late.

Again and again he urged his suit, but all in vain; and, with bitter anger in his heart, he left her, never to meet again till they meet before the throne, where each alike shall cast their crowns at the feet of the Lamb, and give all the glory to Him.

One hour after this scene Frank Mansfield was driving off from Fairlie House on his way to D——, and Cary had sought her

room, pleading the too true excuse of a bad headache. She had sat long, weighed down with a sore grief, exhausted with the mental struggle she had gone through, weary and sad. The daylight had departed unheeded, and the moonlight evening we have spoken of in the last chapter had set in. The fire had died out, and the little moonbeams flitted about, sometimes even playing on Cary's pale face, but she knew it not.

A gentle knock at the door roused her, and, looking up, she saw her brother Frederick. He came up to her kindly, and throwing his arm round her, imprinted a kiss on her forehead. 'Cary,' he said, in a tone of deep emotion, 'I know all. You have acted nobly—rightly; you have been true to your God. I have trembled for you, and yet, thinking that you loved him, I could not take courage to warn you of his real sentiments. Listen to me. You

have given up one dear to you sooner than sin against your God; but, by your so doing, by your Christian consistency, you, by God's grace, have won a brother to his Saviour. Long I have hesitated, but one thing kept me back—it was the inconsistency of professing Christians. Your influence over me has ever been for good; but I thought that even your Christianity would fail if put to a severe trial. But you, strengthened by God, have come out conqueror; and now I trust that, through Christ, I, too, can overcome. One hour ago I vowed on my knees to serve the Lord, and Him alone, if He would receive me. Now, Cary, let us pray with and for one another. And there they knelt, brother and sister giving themselves afresh to the Lord. But it was Frederick's voice that rose in fervent supplications, his voice that prayed that his sister might be upheld and comforted.

And what of Cary? As she lay down to rest that night, it was with a softened and grateful, though a sad heart. The grace of God begun in a brother's heart! surely the knowledge of that was enough to make the dullest spirit sing with joy! The angels in heaven were rejoicing; should she alone be sad? No; henceforth she would go forth to her every-day work, strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

CHAPTER X.

‘Only the Lord can hear,
Only the Lord can see,
The struggle within, how dark and drear,
Though calm the outside may be.’

‘O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all. Thou renewest the face of the earth.’—PSAL. civ. 24, 30.

THE Winter, a dreary one to poor Cary, was over at last. The snow, which had lain long, had disappeared for some days, and all nature was awakening from sleep. Small green buds were beginning to show on the naked boughs, early Spring flowers were opening. The rooks were already unceasingly occupied, from early morn till dark, repairing old or building new nests;

whilst the small birds were rejoicing in the increased heat of the sun, basking in its beams, and every now and then warbling a song of praise.

The whole scene was a peaceful one, suggesting many striking thoughts to a thinking mind. Yes, at all times nature lies before us like an open book, inviting us to read the lessons of wisdom inscribed therein ; but in order to do so with profit, we must read it by the light of the word of God.

In such a way did Cary Gordon read it, as she stood at the open window of the pleasant drawing-room of Fairlie House, breathing the fresh air, and rejoicing in the various manifestations of Spring, seeing in them all the hand of her God.

Calmly had Cary pursued her duties during the Winter, attending anxiously to her father's comfort, interesting herself in his

pursuits, and striving in every way to be a companion to him, fulfilling her numerous household duties, and assisting a daily governess in some parts of Fanny's education. She had complete control of herself and none suspected that one so calm, and seemingly cheerful, bore a secret grief. Nay, even Frederick, as he read her pleasing letters, rejoiced that her sorrow was a thing of the past. Certainly there was in Cary's heart no repenting of the step she had taken, but the sudden wrench of her affections was not to be cured in an hour; the banishing from her mind the remembrances of one so dear to her was hard to do, nay, was only to be done by the Spirit of God. The struggle was carried on unknown to man, but not unknown to God, who seeth the heart. But the victory was obtained; and she could bless the trial which led her more fully to her Saviour;

which enabled her to say of Him from her heart, 'Thou art fairer than the sons of men.'

Very earnest had she been all Winter in visiting the poor in the village. She was a welcome visitor in their houses. In one, in particular, her influence had been greatly blessed; it was that of a poor girl, a dress-maker in the village, who, ere Cary saw her, was obliged to cease from work, and lay dying of consumption. Her illness was long, and the days dreary, but Cary's visits were the great pleasure of her life. And as she read and spoke to her of the Saviour's holy life and atoning death, the drooping girl listened eagerly, and her weary soul found rest in Jesus; and just as the Winter was giving place to Spring, she died, full of faith and hope, blessing, with her last breath, the friend who had led her to her Saviour.

And Cary, as she stood by the open window, was thinking of the dead girl, and of the calm peaceful smile her countenance had worn even in death. Her trials were over now, and she was safe for ever; her body was in the cold grave, but her spirit was with her Lord, beholding His glory. And as Cary looked at the nature around her waking from its Winter's sleep, she thought of the resurrection morn, when the body shall rise again, and be united to the spirit, to dwell for ever, either in the realms of bliss or those of despair—for as we sow, so shall we hereafter reap. And the thought quickened her to work while it was called to-day, knowing that the night cometh when no man can work; quickened her to use the life God gave her to His glory. As she shut down the window, and went off to her household duties, she involuntarily repeated the words she had once

heard a dying man had said to a friend,
'Ah, it is a far more solemn thing to live
than to die.'

Reader, do you ever think of life as a
solemn thing? Do you remember that we
must all appear before the judgment-seat
of Christ, that every one may receive the
things done in his body, according to that
he hath done, whether it be good or bad?

CHAPTER XI.

‘It is a solemn thing to live,
To think, that throned on high,
For every word, and deed, and thought,
God bends his holy eye.’

‘He preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.
—GAL. i. 23.

‘Let us not be weary in well doing—we shall reap,
if we faint not.’—GAL. vi. 9.

YEARS passed on, unmarked by any great events in the household of Fairlie, and yet there were changes there. Time had left its mark on many of the inmates. The once raven black hair of Major Gordon was now white as snow; the firm step had changed into the feeble walk of advancing age. The sharp penetrating eye had lost

some of its keenness, and the stern lines of the mouth had softened, though the look of determination still remained.

And Cary, what of her? Let any one ask Major Gordon, and the old man's eye would brighten as he declared that she was the stay of his old age, the light of his declining days, aye, and better than that, he would say, 'She has been the means of leading me to that better light, even Jesus, who will go with me through the dark valley, cross with me the river of death, and take me to be with Himself for ever. I have mercies to thank my God for, but above all, for the gift of such a daughter. Truly she has not lived in vain.'

Yes, Cary was Cary Gordon still. No longer young, a grey hair even might be seen amongst the chestnut locks, but her smile was as bright as ever, her manners as winning as of yore. The trials of her youth

had been blessed to her. Her Christian life was more steady, her faith stronger, her love to souls greater than before. She was, she used laughingly to tell her sister Fanny, the busiest and happiest person in the world. Every day did she realise more the responsibility of using aright God's great gift of life.

Some months after her parting from Frank Mansfield she had read his marriage in the papers. Again losing sight of him for years, then, through a friend who knew of him only as a companion of her young days, the glad news reached her, that the once unbelieving man was now sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, showing the reality of his conversion by his unwearied labours of love in the cause of that Master he had so long despised, nay, whose holy Being he had denied.

Two years after the hearing this Cary re-

ceived a letter in an unknown handwriting. It was from Frank Mansfield's mother, telling of his death, or rather, she wrote of his triumphant entry into everlasting life. His last words had been those of calm hope and trust in his Saviour; his last act the committing his wife and children to the care of the God of the widow and fatherless. 'And now, dear Caroline,' Mrs Mansfield wrote, 'I have a message for you. On his deathbed he asked me one day to come and sit with him alone, and then he told, what till that moment had been unknown to me, of the love he had once borne to you, and of your refusal, and its cause. "To that refusal, and the words then spoken, I, by God's grace," he said, "owe my conversion. Long I strove to forget them, but in vain. Night and day one thought pursued me—there must be something in religion which had such power as to make a girl like Cary Gordon give

up one she loved, sooner than disobey its commands ; something in religion which produced as its fruit such a life. The Spirit of God gave me no rest till I sought out, and found for myself, the truth of Christianity. In the prayerful study of God's revealed word, the mists which had so long clouded the eyes of my faith were dispelled. I fell at the feet of Jesus, crying out, ' God be merciful to me a sinner ! ' That cry was not, never is, made in vain. Mother, you know the rest—know how, from that hour, that my one endeavour has been to live for the God to whom I owe so much ; to strive to lead others to know and love Him also. Promise me one thing," he added. " When I am dead, write to Cary, and tell her, that her sacrifice to her God has not been in vain,—tell her I owe much to her. I would have asked my wife to do this for me, but I have not spoken to her of Cary, and she

never knew I had loved any but herself; why, then, should I tell her now? She has had my love for years, and it might vex her to know it had ever been otherwise."

Of Cary's feelings on reading this letter we will not write, the readers may imagine them for themselves; but the words that escaped from her lips, as she closed the letter, were, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!'

The influence of Cary's life was always widening, extending through those influenced by it into other and wider spheres—telling on a younger generation.

Fanny Gordon had left her home for that of one well worthy of her, and as her sister placed the bridal wreath on her head, Fanny turned to her, and, with tears in her eyes, blessed her for all the love she had shown to her, for all the blessed influence she had exercised over her.

Then Charlie, now a merchant in India,

on the death of his young wife, sent his three motherless children home to be brought up by Cary. 'Make them as like yourself,' he wrote, 'as possible.'

And Cary accepted the trust with trembling, as she thought of the responsibility, and yet with joy, hearing by the ear of faith her Lord and Master saying, 'Take them, and bring them up for me.' And, in tending her aged father, acting a mother's part to the motherless children, and carrying on many a plan of usefulness amongst her poorer neighbours, Cary's life passed on. The worldling might pity her for leading such a dull one; but she was in possession of a secret which sweetened all her life and rendered it joyous—hers was the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him. 'She ate of the hidden manna, which no man knoweth save he who receiveth it.' Her joys were those of which

the world knoweth nothing. Often, as she sat in the flower garden, especially in early Summer, her conversation with Mrs Grant on her first return home came to her mind. Once more she seemed to hear her earnest words, once more she heard the question—‘ Cary, did you ever think on the Influence of a Life?’

One word of Frederick. From the evening he had given himself to his God, he was a changed man. The great step once taken, there was no drawing back, and Frederick stood forth a bold, fearless Christian—fearless, I mean, as far as dreading the ridicule of the world, or the laugh of ungodly companions. His great talents and his strength of character made him very useful amongst many of his friends, and he became well known both as a clever advocate and as a zealous supporter of every Christian cause. His love to his sister never

abated; and the great lesson he sought to impress particularly on the young, was the Power of a Christian Life.

Now, dear readers, one word in conclusion.—Have you ever thought of the Influence of a Life? You know that God has made you, fashioned all your members, and breathed into you the breath of life. Stop and think for what purpose He has done so. Surely in so doing He did not intend to form you and place you in this world for no higher end than that you might live to yourself, seeking only your own gratification. No, you cannot think so. He formed you for His own glory; placed you in the very circumstances in which you now are; and *there* He gave you a work to do for Him. There you must exercise the Influence of a Life. The one great question is, on which side shall that influence be put forth. There are only two sides—God's and Satan's. Your

life must exercise an influence on some around you, either for good or evil. It must do so even if that influence be unconscious. Oh, rest not till you can say from your heart that you are on the side of the Lord; that your desire is that God's great gift to you of life may be used for His glory; that the love of Jesus felt in your own heart may constrain you to seek to lead others to love Him also; and that the Holy Spirit may bless to those around you the influence of your life. All may not know, as Cary Gordon did, how much God has used them for His glory; but be assured that no Christian life is spent in vain, and what we know not now, Christ has told us we shall know hereafter. Our duty is to reflect our Saviour's light, leaving in His hands the effect that light shall produce on others.

That this short story may have the effect

of making some young reader pause, and think how solemn a thing it is to live, of leading them to consider that the great gift of life has been given to them by God, not to be frittered away in the vain follies of the world, but to be spent in the service of their blessed Saviour, whose yoke they will find to be easy, and whose burden is light, is the earnest prayer of the writer to Him whose blessing alone maketh the words of man of any avail.

THE END.

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